

2026

COMMUNITY PSYCHOLOGY GRADUATE HANDBOOK

SCHOOL OF PSYCHOLOGICAL AND SOCIAL SCIENCES



THE UNIVERSITY OF
WAIKATO
Te Whare Wānanga o Waikato



Welcome

This Handbook provides information about the Master of Applied Psychology (MAppPsy(Comm)) and the Postgraduate Diploma in the Practice of Psychology (PGDipPsych(Comm)).

It also includes information about:

- Community psychology as a specialist area within psychology;
- Degree programmes

If you are intending to study community psychology at graduate and post-graduate level, this handbook will provide the sort of information that will be helpful in making decisions about your future study.

Please see these links for important sources of information:

- [Community Psychology :: University of Waikato](#)
- [Regulations for the Degree of Master of Applied Psychology \(MAppPsy\) :: University of Waikato](#)
- [Regulations for the Postgraduate Diploma in the Practice of Psychology \(PGDipPracPsych\) :: University of Waikato](#)

Please feel free to ask questions if you need further information.

General questions about graduate study in psychology should be directed to psychology@waikato.ac.nz.

General questions about enrolment should be directed to the University of Waikato Student advisors – info@waikato.ac.nz – and scholarships to scholarships@waikato.ac.nz

General questions related to graduate study in community psychology can be directed to the Community psychology programme administrator – community.psychology@waikato.ac.nz

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Introduction

The Community Psychology Graduate Handbook provides an overview of community psychology as an area of specialisation in psychology.

Our Vision

Our vision is to provide a supportive and challenging learning environment in which graduate students can learn to become competent, safe practitioners of community psychology. By that we mean practitioners who:

- are familiar with the values and principles of community psychology and can integrate them into their professional practice,
- act in an ethical manner, and
- can use their knowledge and skills to contribute to changes in the community which enhance the lives of groups of people who are disempowered or oppressed.

About the MAppPsy(Comm) and PGDipPracPsych(Comm)

Community Psychology is available as a specialist subject for the Masters in Applied Psychology (MAppPsy(Comm)) and the Postgraduate Diploma in the Practice of Psychology (Community) (PGDipPracPsych(Comm)). Candidates for the PGDipPracPsych(Comm) must have completed the MAppPsy(Comm) or an equivalent qualification. These are applied degrees, suitable for students wishing to practice in community psychology and offer a flexible, step-wise progression through the academic and professional qualifications leading to registration as a psychologist.

Building on learning obtained in undergraduate degrees, the goals of the MAppPsy(Comm) and PGDipPracPsych(Comm) are to provide graduates with:

- A quality learning experience for transitioning from academic knowledge to professional practice
- A means of achieving a postgraduate qualification recognised in both New Zealand and internationally; and
- A pathway for registration as a Psychologist under the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance Act 2003.

Graduates will have the opportunity to acquire knowledge of:

- The main methods of research in community psychology, gained through empirical research and enquiry, along with practical research experience involving appropriate applied issues
- The cultural, legal and organisational contexts within which community psychology is practised in New Zealand
- The *Code of Ethics for Psychologists Working in Aotearoa New Zealand* and an increased awareness of the ethical considerations which may arise in working as a community psychologist

- The application of psychological principles to addressing real world social issues from a systems perspective that emphasizes the need to build capacity in groups, communities and organisations
- Developments within the profession that enhance the ability of ethnic and cultural communities to become self-determining in a manner consistent with Te Tiriti o Waitangi
- The use of psychology and social science in the pursuit of social justice for individuals, groups and communities
- The analysis of complex situations and the planning of appropriate actions

About the Origins of Community Psychology

Although the term *community psychology* first appeared in the United States during the 1960s, the work of certain European social scientists (e.g. Marie Jahoda) during the 1930s and 1940s is evidence of an older tradition of community interventions. Similarly, in Aotearoa, the antecedents of community psychology can be found in the work of certain psychologists in the first half of the twentieth century, particularly Ernest Beaglehole (1906 – 1965). Beaglehole, a friend of Te Rangi Hiroa (Sir Peter Buck), was a proponent of ethnopsychology (now more often referred to as cross-cultural psychology) and a strong advocate for the application of psychology to improve material and social conditions so as to prevent the development of psychological and other problems.

Broadly speaking, community psychology developed in response to the concern of many psychologists that preventing social problems and improving the quality of people's lives requires more than simply changing the behaviour of individuals. It requires the analysis of, and intervention in, the broader social, political and physical systems affecting human behaviour. It requires confronting oppression, including colonisation, racism, sexism and classism – and addressing the disparities which result.

There have been important contributions to the conceptual development and research base of community psychology from many areas of psychology, particularly applied social psychology, environmental psychology, organisational psychology, and, more recently, critical psychology. In addition, most community psychologists have a strong interdisciplinary emphasis and recognise the contributions from areas such as applied anthropology, applied sociology, community health, geography, and the policy sciences. A major emphasis in training and research in community psychology is clarification of values, objectives and roles appropriate for practising community psychologists, and the maintenance of an interdisciplinary perspective towards social problems and community development.

About Community Psychology at the University of Waikato

The School of Psychological and Social Sciences at the University of Waikato was established in 1965 by the late Emeritus Professor James Ritchie, a student and son-in-law of Earnest Beaglehole. Under Ritchie's leadership, the School developed strengths in both cross cultural psychology and social psychology, and an interest in the application of psychological knowledge to address social problems. It was therefore not surprising that the School became the first in Aotearoa/New Zealand to teach community psychology. Moreover, this background has helped to ensure that cultural issues,

cultural justice and the Treaty of Waitangi have become integral to teaching and research in community psychology at Waikato.

The first graduate paper in community psychology at the University of Waikato commenced in 1977. A full graduate programme leading to registration as a psychologist began in 1980. The Community Psychology programme has established a tradition of collaborating with community organisations in areas such as evaluation, policy-related research, organisational development, and community needs surveys. Staff members have close ties with a number of community organisations within the University region (central North Island of New Zealand) and beyond.

Students in the programme have access to a considerable range of community organisations, such as alcohol and family counselling services, iwi social services, community houses, homeless shelters, district health boards, women's refuges, women's health centres, local and regional government policy and community development sections, and the central government departments (or ministries) of Māori Development (Te Puni Kōkiri), Social Development, Health, Corrections and Education.

For more information, see [Appendix 1: The Role of Community Psychology](#) and [Appendix 2: Values and Principles of Community Psychology](#)

About Career Opportunities

Graduates from the University of Waikato programme have taken up positions in health services, community service organisations, government departments and in private practice. Over the years, there has been a continuing demand for graduates with community psychology skills. Most graduates have little difficulty in finding employment, especially in the main centres. An increasingly common option is for graduates to become involved in contract work with human service organisations. Employment taken up by graduates has included positions as:

- Policy Analyst, Te Aka Whai Ora Waikato
- National Executive Officer, Parents of Vision Impaired (NZ)
- Co-founder of Humanly NZ
- Team leader for a support services agency
- Kaiwhakahaere (Iwi Liaison Policy Analyst), Regional Council
- Consumer Participation Coordinator, District Health Board
- Researcher, Research and Development Unit, Urban Māori Authority
- Social Development Manager, Ministry of Social Development
- Health Promoter, District Health Board
- Social Development Team Leader, City Council
- Relationships Manager, Iwi Social Service
- Independent Researcher and Evaluator
- Public Health Evaluation Support, Population Health, Te Aka Whai Ora Waikato
- Researcher, Research and Evaluation company
- Analyst, Takawaenga Māori Unit, City Council

About the School of Psychological and Social Sciences

As well as community psychology, the School of Psychological and Social Sciences offers specialisations in kaupapa Māori psychology, cross-cultural psychology, social psychology, organisational psychology, experimental psychology, applied behavioural analysis and clinical psychology. Community psychology papers are offered at both undergraduate and graduate levels. The school is part of the Division of Arts, Law, Psychology and Social Sciences (ALPSS), which includes allied programmes such as those in women's and gender studies, social policy, and environmental planning.

Of particular relevance is the school's commitment to providing for the needs of tangata whenua. Community psychology staff are principal investigators within the Māori & Psychology Research Unit (MPRU). Staff and students have regular involvement in applied research with Māori organisations and the programme has a clear commitment to operate in a fashion consistent with the Treaty of Waitangi.

About the Community Psychology staff

Psychology staff profiles can be accessed here: [Psychology staff](#)



Professor Bridgette Masters-Awatere

Programme Director

bridgette.masters-awatere@waikato.ac.nz

Staff profile

Bridgette identifies with several iwi. Her strongest connections are to Te Rarawa and Tūwharetoa ki Kawerau. Bridgette completed her *BSocSc* in Māori and her *MSocSc*, *PGDipPsych(Comm)* and *PhD* in Psychology at the University of Waikato. Her interests are in indigenous health and well-being, community development, health service provision, evaluation research and kaupapa Māori methodologies. Bridgette is a registered psychologist, member of the NZ Psychologists Board Accreditation Committee, and the NZ Psychological Society (including the Institute of Community Psychology - IComPA and the National Standing Committee on Bicultural Issues - NSCBI). Bridgette teaches in both the *MAppPsy(Comm)* and the *PGDipPracPsych(Comm)* and is currently the Programme Director.



Dr Ririwai Fox

(Ngāti Kahungunu ki Wairarapa, Ngāti Porou) is a Kaupapa Māori researcher and proud graduate of Kaupapa Māori education (Kōhanga Reo, Kura Kaupapa Māori, Wharekura).

Lecturer

ririwai.fox@waikato.ac.nz

Staff profile

Ririwai's research is centred around Māori cultural identity and he is specifically interested in the adaptive benefits of being/becoming embedded in cultural values, beliefs, and practises. He is passionate about imbuing Māori cultural worldviews into quantitative research methods in Psychology, recently developing the Māori Cultural Embeddedness Scale (MaCES). Ririwai completed his doctoral research at Victoria University of Wellington in 2023, whilst also serving in public sector advisory roles focused on equity for Māori. His various roles included the monitoring of public sector outcomes for Māori; commissioning of whānau ora services; advising the establishment of Te Aka Whai Ora; and supporting research and intelligence for public health through Te Whatu Ora. As a Kaupapa Māori researcher, Ririwai is committed to decolonising and indigenising academia. He is strongly passionate about supporting tauira Māori to reach their potential and excel in education.



Dr Kim Southey

(Ngāti Porou, Ngāti Kuia, Ngāti Koata)

Lecturer

kim.southey@waikato.ac.nz

Staff Profile

Kim is a registered community psychologist who has worked in both government and Māori provider organisations to support health equity through policy development and in frontline roles grounded in Whānau Ora principles. She has led community and iwi research in areas that include child protection, sexual and reproductive health and general health and well-being. Kim completed a postdoctoral research project in partnership with Te Atawhai o te Ao (Independent Māori Institute for Environment and Health), examining health policy and Māori ontology which draws on her doctoral research focused on Māori metaphysics and the notion of mental illness. She has previously taught within the School of Education in Māori philosophy and knowledge production. She received the University of Waikato, Koko Kairangi award for best doctoral thesis (2020).



Rewi Nankivell

Lecturer

rewi.nankivell@waikato.ac.nz

Rewi brings more than two decades of experience in the education sector, demonstrating a wide range of management and leadership skills. He has a strong background as a company director and is currently pursuing a doctorate in education at Te Herenga Waka, Victoria University of Wellington. He is currently working as a lecturer in psychology, teaching Kaupapa Māori research papers at the School of Psychological and Social Sciences, University of



Dr Kimberly Jackson

(Pākehā)

Senior Tutor

kimberly.jackson@waikato.ac.nz

Staff profile

Kimberly is a teaching fellow with the University of Waikato. She holds a BA in education and sociology from the University of Canterbury. Kimberly completed her Masters in social policy in the UK while caring for her young family. Kimberly's work is motivated by a critical approach to social policy, specifically in relation to equity, welfare, and poverty issues. Her doctoral research was an interdisciplinary exploration of programmes responding to hunger in schools in the past and present, encompassing media and policy analysis as well as the everyday experiences of parents feeding their families on low incomes. Kimberly teaches in the *MAppPsy(Comm)*.



Dr Rebekah Graham

(Pākehā)

Senior Tutor

rebekah.graham@waikato.ac.nz

Staff profile

Rebekah is based in the Waikato region of Aotearoa New Zealand. Rebekah is a registered community psychologist and contributes into the community psychology postgraduate programme at the University of Waikato. Her academic and research interests are in the areas of poverty, health, and food insecurity with a particular focus on the ways in which inequities of access to resources play out in the everyday lives of New Zealanders. Rebekah also works for Parents of Vision Impaired NZ, a consumer group with Blind Low Vision NZ. In this role, Rebekah advocates strongly and consistently for inclusion, accessibility and support for all, with a focus on parents/whānau of a vision impaired child. Rebekah teaches in the *MAppPsy(Comm)*.

Programme Associates

The Associates are experienced practitioners of community psychology who contribute to the community psychology programme through guest lectures, the supervision and mentoring of students and as examiners. A current list of Community Psychology Programme Associates can be [found here](#)

Programme Advisory Committee

The Programme Advisory Committee comprises of Associates, Institute of Community Psychology (IComPA) leadership, academic staff and the student representative. The committee is an important forum for considering broad matters about the curriculum and structure of the programme. All intern students are welcome to participate in the “open” parts of these meetings (i.e. there are sometimes confidential matters to be considered for which student participation is inappropriate). Such participation helps build links between interns and associates. The committee meets annually or as otherwise required.

Community Psychology Programme Management Committee

The Community Psychology Programme Management Committee comprises core staff who contribute to the programme. The committee is responsible for the following:

- Sets overall policy for the *MAppPsy(Comm)* and *PGDipPracPsych(Comm)*.
- Approves student programmes.
- Appoints the members of examination panels.
- Facilitates involvement of practitioners in programme delivery.
- Considers teaching and supervision responsibilities.

- Plans the programme budget.
- Recommends the appointment of Associates.
- Facilitates feedback from key stakeholders via communication with Community Psychology Programme Associates and the Institute of Community Psychology.

Community Psychology Selections Panel

The Community Psychology Selections Committee comprises representatives of core staff who contribute to the programme, associates and can include IComPA representatives. Panel membership may change each year but is always chaired by the Programme Director. Two Panel(s) are convened to assess the applications for MAppPsy(Comm) and PGDipPracPsych(Comm).

Student representation

Each year, students who have been admitted to the *PGDipPracPsych(Comm)* elect a representative. The student representative may participate in School of Psychological and Social Sciences (graduate) student representative meetings and in Community Psychology Programme Management Committee meetings when there is a particular issue that interns want discussed by the committee. Like other interns, the representative is welcome to participate in Programme Advisory Committee meetings.

Student grievances

As a graduate student, you have available various avenues for resolving grievances or appealing decisions. You should consult the calendar and relevant handbooks for detailed procedures. The possibilities include approaching:

- The paper convenor. This is usually a first step for course-related matters.
- The Community Psychology Management Committee via the Programme Director. This may be useful for more general policy matters.
- The School of Psychological and Social Sciences Convenor of Graduate Studies.
- The School of Psychological and Social Sciences Head of School. Normally, you would approach the Chairperson only after exhausting other avenues.

For information about more formal procedures, see *Student Complaints Procedures* in the University Calendar

The University of Waikato Calendar also sets out procedures to be used by students who wish to lodge formal appeals against the grade awarded to them in a specific course. See *Assessment Regulations*

Networking and communication

Building good networks with your peers, more senior students, academic staff and practitioners can really enhance your experience of graduate study. Such networking will help you complete group projects, identify research opportunities (e.g. for your thesis), mobilise support, access mentoring and enhance your professional development. It may also help you get a job.

While networking is an intrinsic part of group work and undertaking community-based research, there are other things which will help you build relevant networks.

New Zealand Psychological Society

Become a student member of the New Zealand Psychological Society - [New Zealand Psychological Society \(psychology.org.nz\)](https://psychology.org.nz)

This is free and gives you access to newsletters and professional development events, including discounted registration for the Society's annual conferences.

Institute of Community Psychology Aotearoa (IComPA)

This specialist group within the Society is particularly useful for graduate students in community psychology by providing relevant professional development events and access to potential placement supervisors should you advance to the internship. You can also join this group for free. For more information, go to [Institute of Community Psychology Aotearoa \(IComPA\) :: NZ Psychological Society](#)

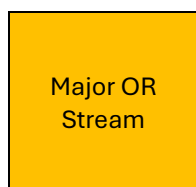
Watch for social and professional development events. These are organised from time to time, often in conjunction with the Institute of Community Psychology Aotearoa.



Suggested academic pathway for registration as a psychologist in Community Psychology

Please note: This document is designed to show you a Bachelor of Social Sciences/MAppPsy/PGDipPracPsych pathway in Community Psychology only – please consult ALPSS Student services to plan your specific undergraduate degree (Bachelor of Arts, Bachelor of Social Sciences). Please consult HECS Student services to plan your specific undergraduate degree – Bachelor of Science

Qual	Year/ Points	Papers							
Bachelor of Social Sciences	Y1 120 points	PSYCH 100	PSYCH 101	One from List A	ARTSC 110	Field of degree 100 level	Field of degree 100 level	Elective	Elective
Bachelor of Social Sciences	Y2 120 points	PSYCH 202	PSYCH 211	PSYCH COURSE 200 level	One from List B	Field of degree 100 level	Elective	Elective	Elective
Bachelor of Social Sciences	Y3 120 points	PSYCH 302	PSYCH 307	PSYCH COURSE 300 level	PSYCH COURSE 300 level	WIL COURSE	Elective	Elective	Elective
MAppPsy(Comm) Year 1	Y4 120 points	PSYCH 511	PSYCH 513	PSYCH 575	PSYCH 582	PSYCH 583	Elective	Elective	
MAppPsy(Comm) Year 2	Y5 120 points	PSYCH 594							
PGDipPracPsych (Comm)	Y6 120 points	PSYCH 541			PSYCH 542	PSYCH 543			



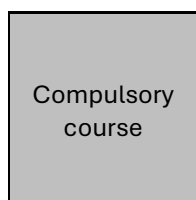
Major OR Stream

A major or stream is the main subject of your degree.



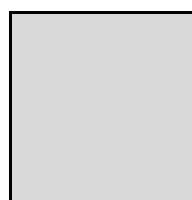
Elective

You may have room in your degree to take courses that aren't part of your major or compulsory for your degree. These are called elective courses. Electives can be from any subject offered by the University.



Compulsory course

All of these courses must be taken as part of your degree.



Other courses which are part of the degree – Please consult the ALPSS Student Services team to fully plan your degree

Master of Applied Psychology(Community)

Overview

This is a two-year degree (or its equivalent part-time). It comprises taught papers and a research component. It will provide you with advanced knowledge of the underlying concepts, principles and guiding values associated with community psychology that are taught at third year undergraduate level in PSYCH302.

Specific requirements are: 240 points at 500 level or above, comprising

1. The following compulsory papers (105 points):
 - PSYCH511 Evaluation Research Design (15pts)
 - PSYCH513 Evaluation Research Analysis (30pts)
 - PSYCH575 Kaupapa Māori Psychology (15pts)
 - PSYCH583 Foundations of Community Psychology (15pts)
 - PSYCH582 Community Health Psychology (15pts)
 - PSYCH502 Community Culture and Diversity (15pts)¹
2. Optional papers in Psychology or in other subjects to a total of either 30, 60 or 90 points (depending on your thesis/dissertation selection) are permitted. Optional papers are selected in consultation with the Community Psychology Programme Director.
3. Completion of a thesis or dissertation. Either a 120 point thesis (PSYCH594), a 90 point thesis (PSYCH593) or a 60 point dissertation (PSYCH592) is required. Unless there are particular reasons for doing otherwise, a 120 point thesis is the recommended option. Your thesis or dissertation must be on a topic that is relevant to community psychology. Those who chose a 60 point dissertation cannot progress directly to PGDipPracPsych(Comm).

Normally, students complete 120 points in taught papers in the first year and a 120 point thesis in their second year. Students who opt for a 90 point thesis in their second year would normally complete a further 30 points in taught papers. Those who chose a 60pt option will be required to do further substantive self-directed research before being eligible for entry to PGDipPracPsych(Comm).

Entry requirements and procedure

For entry into *the MAppPsy(Comm)* students need to have completed a bachelor's degree with a major in psychology, including PSYCH302 *Community, Culture and Diversity* and PSYCH307 *Psychological Research Methods* (or their equivalents). Good preparation at

¹ Students who have not previously completed PSYCH302 will be required to do PSYCH502

² If you do not have at least B+ average needed to proceed directly to the MAppPsy, you may, enrol instead in the (generic) PGDipPsych. Include the compulsory listed in (1) above. Achieving at least a B+ average or better across the 120 points of the PGDipPsych will enable you to enter the MAppPsy and transfer the credit points you have obtained to the Master's degree.

undergraduate level for entry into the *MAppPsy(Comm)* includes papers which expose you to some or all of the following: the study of social issues, applied social research, biculturalism, feminist perspectives, critical psychology and social policy.

Normally, to enter the Masters programme you will need to have a grade of at least B+ average in psychology undergraduate papers, calculated either across all your psychology papers or across your best 60 points of 300-level psychology papers². (Note that directed studies cannot be included in the calculation of grade average.) You can also be admitted to **the second year of the MAppPsy(Comm) if you have completed either a BSocSc(Hons) or a PGDipPsych with a grade average of at least B+ and have completed (or completing³) the compulsory papers listed above.**

Outline of papers for the MAppPsy(Comm)

PSYCH502 Community Culture and Diversity (15pts)

This paper provides a theoretical grounding in programme evaluation, with an emphasis on the evaluation of programmes in the not-for-profit sector. Emphasis is placed on qualitative methods, collaborative approaches and evaluation as a strategy of incremental social change.

PSYCH511 Evaluation Research Design (15pts)

This paper provides a theoretical grounding in programme evaluation, with an emphasis on the evaluation of programmes in the not-for-profit sector. Emphasis is placed on qualitative methods, collaborative approaches and evaluation as a strategy of incremental social change.

PSYCH513 Evaluation Research Analysis (30pts)

This paper provides an introduction to evaluation praxis with a major focus on completing a small-scale evaluation of a social service or health programme. Such roles as consultant, advocate, liaison and technician are part of the skills students' experience. Engagement with the client through refining and negotiating an evaluation plan are part of setting up, collecting and analysing information, and presenting the results of the evaluation in the appropriate format(s). Students are expected to be active learners and take the lead responsibility of reporting evaluation progress to the client (which involves undertaking agreed tasks on time and reporting back on them).

² If you do not have at least B+ average needed to proceed directly to the MAppPsy, you may, enrol instead in the (generic) PGDipPsych. Include the compulsory listed in (1) above. Achieving at least a B+ average or better across the 120 points of the PGDipPsych will enable you to enter the MAppPsy and transfer the credit points you have obtained to the Master's degree.

³ If you have not completed all the compulsory papers, you may be able to combine outstanding papers with a 90 point thesis to make up the 120 points of the second year of the MAppPsy

Emphasis is placed on qualitative methods, collaborative approaches and evaluation as a strategy of incremental social change.

PSYCH575 Kaupapa Māori Psychology (15pts)

Kaupapa Māori psychology is sensitive to context, conscious of history and responsive to multiple ways of knowing and being in the world. This paper will cover topics relevant to students who wish to work and research as psychologists in applied settings. Working responsibly with Maori and other Indigenous peoples will be a central focus in this course. Topics covered include: understanding Kaupapa Māori (for Māori, Pākehā, and Tauīwi), colonisation, decolonisation, and applying Kaupapa Māori in practice. Rōpū discussions and flipped teaching are the foundations of this course.

PSYCH582 Community Health Psychology (15pts)

This paper provides an introduction to community health psychology and the theoretical and practical dilemmas faced by psychologists working with participative approaches within the health arena.

PSYCH583 Foundations of Community Psychology (15pts)

This paper emphasises the application of community psychology in Aotearoa New Zealand, especially in relation to its emergence as a bicultural nation. Students are strongly recommended to also enrol in PSYCH575, which deals specifically with the Treaty of Waitangi.

Thesis or Dissertation

MAppPsy(Comm) students have a choice between completing a 120 point thesis (PSYCH594) or a 90 point thesis (PSYCH593 - plus an additional 30 points in papers. The requirements for theses and dissertations are set out in the University Calendar. In addition to fulfilling those requirements, *MAppPsy(Comm)* students are required to undertake their thesis (or dissertation) research on a community psychology topic.

How to apply

Firstly, apply for the qualification in MyWaikato.

Your application will be assessed to ensure you meet the university entry criteria.

Once you meet university entry, your application will be forwarded to the school and you will be sent an internal school selection form which must be completed by September 15.

Further information about the MAppPsy application can be found in [Appendix 4: MAppPsy – How to apply.](#)

Postgraduate Diploma in the Practice of Psychology(Community)⁴

This qualification is completed while you are undertaking intensive supervised professional practice as an intern psychologist. It can be taken full-time over one year or part-time over two years. With a focus on obtaining and demonstrating a minimum level of competency in all of the core competencies for community psychology, the *PGDipPracPsych(Comm)* provides you with the opportunity to develop and apply the knowledge and skills relevant to the practice of community psychology. Graduates will have the skills to adapt to a variety of community settings and work at various levels from the flax-roots to policy making. The *PGDipPracPsych(Comm)* has been accredited by the Psychologists Board as providing entry to the Psychologist scope of practice.

Requirements

To complete the *PGDipPracPsych(Comm)* you must complete at least 1500 hours of supervised practice (either paid or unpaid) in an approved internship, as well as the associated assignments, supervision sessions and other professional development activities. You will be required to enrol in and complete the following papers:

- PSYC541 Case Study Analysis in Community Psychology (40 points)
- PSYC542 Professional Issues in Community Psychology (20 points)
- PSYCH543 The Practice of Community Psychology (60 points)

All three papers must initially be taken concurrently during your internship. You will also be required to be registered with the New Zealand Psychologists Board as an intern psychologist.

All assessment in the *PGDipPracPsych(Comm)* is on a pass/fail basis. A final oral examination is undertaken. To be eligible to sit the examination, you will need to have completed a minimum of 1500 hours supervised practice in psychology and to have completed the various assignments to a satisfactory standard.

Opportunities to sit the final oral examination will normally be offered in February of each year.

To grant a pass in the final oral examination, the examination panel needs to be satisfied that you have demonstrated and reached a minimum level of competency in each of the core competencies of the *PGDipPracPsych(Comm)* and any specialist competencies relating to your particular work setting (see Appendix 3: Community Psychology Core Competencies).

Coursework/Supervision Meetings

In addition to an induction at the beginning of the year, each student is required to participate in regular weekly supervision meetings with their university supervisor and monthly with placement supervisors.

⁴ For detailed information about the *PGDipPracPsych(Comm)* see the *PGDipPracPsych(Comm): Application Handbook*

The material covered in the coursework/supervision meetings is directly relevant to the practice of community psychology, the development of your professional skills and knowledge, as well as for the writing of your case studies, practice logs and project/casework folio. Topics include:

- Being a practitioner
- Models of supervision
- Reflective practice as a tool for professional development
- Case study writing
- Critical multi-level analysis
- Ethical practice
- Treaty of Waitangi and Biculturalism
- Cultural Safety
- Community and organisational processes and interventions
- Relationship skills
- Communication skills
- Planning for professional development

A record of attendance at coursework/supervision meetings will be kept. Because the *PGDipPracPsych(Comm)* is based around receiving intensive supervised professional practice as an intern psychologist, to be eligible to sit the final examination you must have met the requirement to have regularly attended coursework/supervision meetings. Video conferencing is an option for some meetings if you are unable to regularly attend in person.

Workload

The workload is heavy. While enrolling full-time and completing the requirements within one year is encouraged, interns who cannot get adequate study leave may be better placed to complete their internship over two years.

Enrolment

You should consult the *PGDipPracPsych(Comm): Intern Handbook* for details about the process and the eligibility criteria. However, the most important of these are that your enrolment will be approved only if you have:

- Submitted or completed a master's degree specialising in community psychology (e.g. the MAppPsy(Comm) or its equivalent).
- Secured an appropriate internship⁵. The Intern Handbook has details about what constitutes a suitable internship: internships can be paid or unpaid.
- Appropriate supervision arranged (you will need both a university supervisor and a placement supervisor(s)).
- Become registered as an Intern Psychologist.

⁵ Securing an appropriate internship may take some time. The start date of an internship can be delayed (for a period not more than 6months) while the details of a suitable internship is being secured.

Enrolment is either full time for 12 months or part-time for 24 months.

How to apply

Please contact the programme for the PGDipPracPsych application handbook – community.psychology@waikato.ac.nz

Important Policies and Regulations

Your attention is drawn to the following University policies and regulations which are contained in the University Calendar:

- [Assessment Regulations :: University of Waikato](#)
- [Use of Māori in Assessment :: University of Waikato](#)
- [Ethical Conduct in Human Research and Related Activities Regulations :: University of Waikato](#)
- [Student Discipline Regulations :: University of Waikato](#)
- [Computer Systems Regulations :: University of Waikato](#)
- [Student Research Regulations :: University of Waikato](#)

Appendix 1: The Role of Community Psychology

This document was developed by practitioners and academic staff in cooperation with the New Zealand Psychological Society and the Institute of Community Psychology Aotearoa, August 2016.

Why Community psychology?

Informed by an understanding of the social determinants of health community psychologists develop, support and evaluate interventions that will enhance health outcomes for individuals, whānau and communities in Aotearoa. With a focus on social justice, te Tiriti o Waitangi, and sustainability we are skilled in analysing how the complex array of policies, systems and structures in society are developed and organised and the impact they have on individuals and communities especially those who are oppressed, stigmatised or marginalised.

Community psychology as an applied social science encourages inter-disciplinary approaches to learning, including sociology, community development, education and the policy sciences.

Training involves awareness of the social and cultural positioning of the practitioner, critical perspectives on knowledge creation and the development of analytical skills in research and practice. Experiential knowledge is valued, along with knowledge derived from empirical studies.

Community psychology research employs a wide range of methodologies, the choice of method being determined by the particular context and issue being addressed. There is a focus on group, community and societal interventions which address the structural factors maintaining oppression and sub-optimal health. Community psychology pays particular attention to process, valuing bottom-up, inclusive and collaborative ways of working.

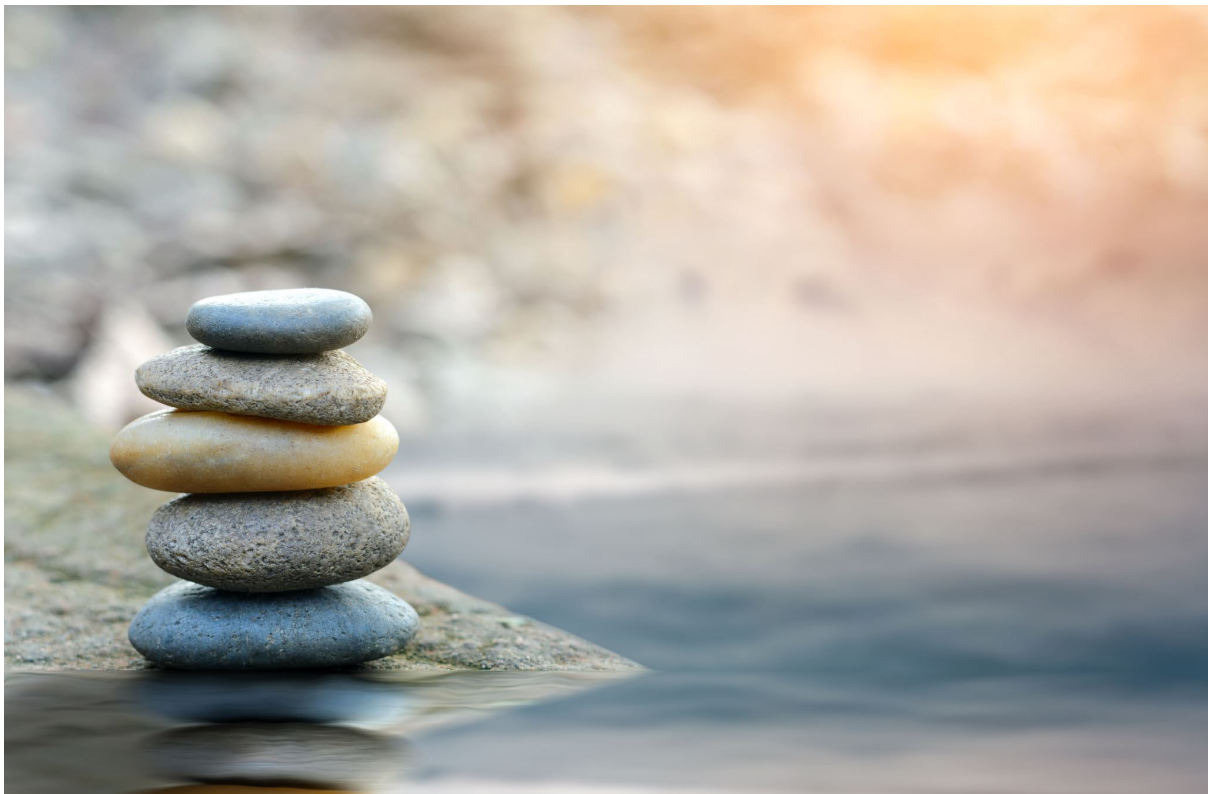
Community psychology is a specialty paper taught in several universities across Aotearoa. The University of Waikato has an accredited programme, Post Graduate Diploma in the Practice of Psychology (Community), which leads to registration with the New Zealand Psychologists Board in the psychologist scope of practice. Community psychologists have a minimum of six years' university education and are required to maintain a high standard of ethical practice with regular supervision and yearly audit of our practice.

Community psychologists contribute to the health of New Zealanders

Community psychologists bring knowledge and understanding of how individuals, families, communities and society as a whole interact with each other and are affected by the environments they live, learn, work and play in. We apply a systems-based approach to working together with people in communities to explore and develop an understanding of ways to work with the challenges experienced.

We work across sectors

Community psychologists work with health, education, justice, disability, iwi, environmental and social services providers, policy makers and funders. We offer knowledge and skills in a range of policy and evaluation research methods and approaches. We will set up and carry out policy analyses and the evaluation of programmes and initiatives across a wide range of organisations, including central and local Government, non-government and community based organisations and groups.



We focus on the health and wellbeing of communities

Community psychologists contribute their expertise in a number of health and social services to encourage healthy people and communities. For example, they may be employed in the areas of research, policy, strategic planning, whānau ora, mental health, community development and in public and population health. They value working with people across a range of sectors to initiate, develop and promote prevention and intervention strategies that improve the health outcomes for people and communities.

Appendix 2: Values and Principles of Community Psychology

Values are inextricably enmeshed in all forms of human behaviour, including psychological research and practice. Values help frame the way we see the world and play an important role in determining our priorities. In this sense, values help set our agendas. Community psychologists believe it is important to make explicit the values guiding their practice. Core values and principles which have been identified in community psychology are; social justice, empowerment, diversity and cultural pluralism, cultural awareness, social innovation, evaluation, community development, community participation and collaboration.

Social justice

Social justice requires us to imagine a more humane world, a world without inequity or oppression, a world in which the dignity and worth of all people are affirmed and the rights of individuals and collectives are protected – as far as those rights are consistent with protecting the rights of others. Social justice involves promoting social change which benefits people who are experiencing disadvantage. Examples include highlighting discrimination and oppression, identifying inequities in the ways communities function, providing access to resources and support services, challenging the privilege of dominant groups and changing practices which discriminate against non-dominant groups.

Empowerment and competence enhancement

Empowerment has become one of the key themes in community psychology. It has been defined as enhancing the possibility that people can more actively control their own lives. Both the growth of a psychological sense of personal control or influence and a concern with actual social influence, political power, and legal rights are inherent in the concept of empowerment. Many people now recognise the importance of social interventions being planned to enhance the competence of individuals, groups, and organisations involved in community development. Such social change interventions emphasise the development of strengths, competencies and skills rather than just describing deficits, weaknesses and needs.

Diversity and cultural pluralism

Community psychologists value human diversity. From a social justice perspective, diversity is valued because the worth and dignity of all people needs to be respected, regardless of their individual and group characteristics. Ecology teaches us that diversity leads to more robust communities because the knowledge and experience of diverse groups can be utilised in facing challenges and developing solutions to complex problems.

Differences, such as those of culture, gender, class, sexual orientation or (dis)ability should be recognized and respected. People should be free to express their cultural values and participate in all spheres of life. This enhances the likelihood of maximizing the quality of life for people within diverse societies. Promotion of cultural pluralism follows from the belief in the positive nature of human diversity and the right to be

different without suffering material or

psychological sanctions. In particular, indigenous peoples and other communities have the right to self-determination for their communities.

The belief in cultural pluralism is constrained by the proviso that the expression of cultural or religious values must not infringe on the rights of other groups or deny the validity of individual rights.



Cultural awareness and biculturalism

The promotion of diversity and pluralism requires an awareness of the culturally-bounded nature of one's own experiences and knowledge. It requires a critical examination of what might be thought of as "normal," "true" or "objective" to reveal the limitations of dominant world views. For members of dominant groups, it requires reflecting on one's own identity and how that has shaped one's view of the world. It requires a willingness to learn about cultures other than one's own. While the specifics of this may vary from setting to setting, all community psychologists in Aotearoa/New Zealand are expected to have an appreciation of kaupapa Māori.

An important part of the agenda of social justice within Aotearoa/New Zealand is having an understanding of the process of colonisation and its impact on Maori. An outcome of such concern is working to develop social, political and economic processes which are consistent with the spirit and intentions of Te Tiriti O Waitangi.

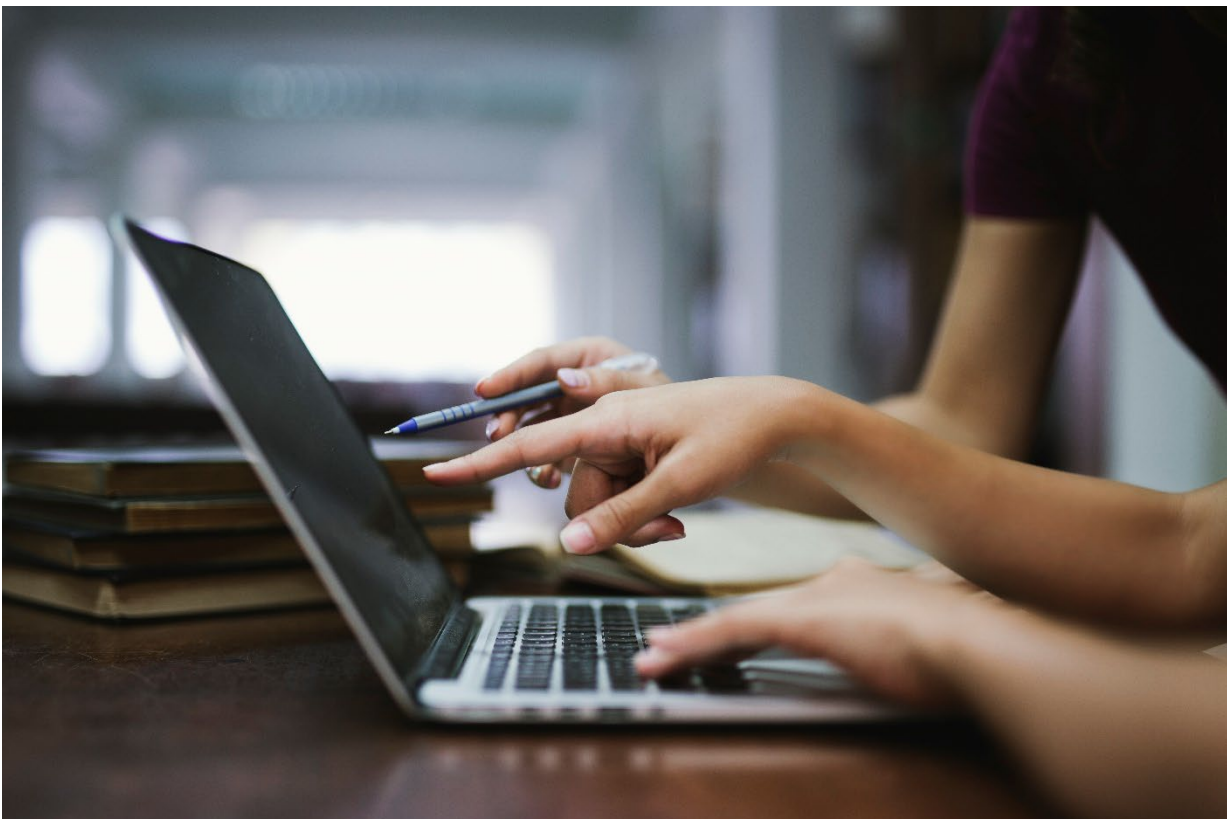
Community psychologists work in ways which promote self-determination for Māori and encourage non-Māori to better understand and practice treaty-based partnerships.

Social innovation and social change

Community Psychologists promote the use of innovative techniques and approaches to deal with recurrent social problems, recognizing that some existing approaches are ineffective, or make social problems worse. Social change strategies follow from the recognition that reducing social problems can often be best achieved by changing environmental conditions instead of, or as well as, adopting change strategies that focus upon individuals.

Evaluation

Evaluation of social action is seen as an essential element of social change and social innovation. Evaluation can identify positive and negative effects of social change strategies. As well, evaluation can provide information for decision-making relevant to programme and organisational development and improvement. Evaluation is important to community psychology because it is recognized that resources are usually limited and need to be used as efficiently as possible. Evaluation and social innovation are also relevant to concerns about being accountable to people affected by social change.



Community development and participation

Community development refers to a process of strengthening a community's human, economic and environmental resources with the goal of creating a 'healthy' or 'competent' community. A healthy community is one that can reduce social, psychological and physical health problems and enable members to achieve their aspirations. Community involvement and cohesion are important factors in community development. Community development is more likely to occur if members identify with community activities and are committed to community concerns. Community members should be able to participate in assessment of needs and setting of priorities in matters affecting their communities. A community psychology approach to community development emphasises the importance of working alongside community members to define and address community concerns. A community psychology approach to policy making emphasises the importance of ensuring that there is genuine participation from all stakeholder groups.

Collaboration and partnership

Sustainable positive change requires work practices which involve collaboration and partnership. Community psychologists recognize that they do not have a monopoly on important knowledge, and value the knowledge, skills and experience of others. Relationships with community groups and organisations are viewed as partnerships, where each partner makes important contributions; for example, in the setting of research objectives and the ways in which the research findings are used.



An ecological approach

An ecological approach recognizes the importance of contextual factors in shaping community life and in maintaining social problems. These factors include features of the social, organisational, political, cultural, economic and physical environments. A complete account of environmental influences also requires consideration of the historical context. Although psychologists have long assumed that behaviour is a function of both individual and environmental influences, many areas of psychology do not elaborate or investigate the wide range of environmental influences on individuals and communities. Growing understanding of the influence of environmental factors on individuals and groups has seen community psychology link more closely with environmental psychology and human geography.

Systems perspectives

A further aspect of the field of community psychology, related to understanding environmental and organisational influences on behaviour, is knowledge about how social systems operate.

Systems perspectives involve the concepts of multiple causation of social problems, multiple levels of analysis, and the operation of processes which accelerate or resist change in organisational, institutional and community systems.

Prevention

In most human services, distinctions are made between prevention and treatment. It is evident that for many social problems, such as substance abuse, nearly all resources are allocated to immediate services for acute cases. Psychologists have traditionally focused upon treatment and early detection in their prevention work. Community based disciplines try to provide a more equitable allocation of resources into preventive interventions. Community psychologists' prevention efforts may be characterized as either individual focused (e.g., teaching individuals to drink in moderation) or environment focused (e.g., reducing the availability of alcohol).

In recent years the concept of health promotion, incorporating the idea of empowerment, has gained more prominence compared to prevention. In the words of the Ottawa Charter, health promotion is the process of enabling people to increase control over, and to improve, their health. Health promotion pays attention to the societal conditions necessary for health (e.g. peace, shelter, education, food, income, a stable eco-system, sustainable resources, social justice and equity). It is characterised by a holistic approach (promotion of health generally rather than the prevention of specific problems) and encourages "bottom up", community development initiatives.

Appendix 3: Community Psychology Core Competencies

The New Zealand Psychologists Board defines core competencies as the minimum competencies that each practitioner should possess at the time of registration. In the context of registration with the Board, competence is defined as the complex interaction of four major components: knowledge; skills; judgement; and diligence. The following descriptions are taken from the Board and considered useful in aiding you to understand what each of these components refers to.

- **Knowledge** involves having absorbed and understood a body of information sufficiently well to then understand and conceptualise the range of professional issues that one can reasonably expect to encounter. Knowledge is a necessary, but not sufficient foundation for competence.
- **Skill** is the ability to effectively apply knowledge in actual practice.
- **Judgement** involves knowing when to apply which skills, and under what circumstances. It includes self-reflection on and awareness of one's own values, experiences, attitudes, and social context, and how these may influence actions and perceived meaning. Good judgement increases the likelihood that choices made will be beneficial for the individuals, families, groups, communities, and organisations with which psychologists work.
- **Diligence** requires the consistent application of knowledge, skills, and judgement in one's professional activities and taking care to give priority to the clients' needs. Diligence also encompasses striving to give the best service possible to each and every client⁶.



⁶ New Zealand Psychologists Board. (2017). *The Continuing Competence Programme for Psychologists Practising in Aotearoa New Zealand: A Guide for Participants*. p.3

Below are the core competencies you would be expected to have achieved on completion of the *PGDipPracPsych(Comm)*. To grant a pass in the final oral examination, the panel needs to be satisfied that you have demonstrated and reached a minimum level of competency in each of these on completion of your internship. Achievement of some competencies can be achieved via your graduate training, for example the research competency is demonstrated via the completion of your thesis (at Masters or Doctoral level).

The competencies refer to the component skills or knowledge that contribute to the whole, and it is important to remember that the core competencies are intended to be read in a holistic manner. Ongoing assessment against the competencies will occur regularly during your coursework/supervision meetings. During the examination process, consideration of each intern begins with a discussion of the extent to which you have exhibited each competency in your coursework submitted. Throughout this process, any competencies the examiners are uncertain about will generate questions that the intern will need to address.

The competencies are grouped under 3 headings. These are:

- **Foundational competencies** relate to key principles and values of community psychology and to the ethical practice of community psychology. You are expected to have accomplished every competency in this group. You will be expected to have demonstrated them either during the internship (including relevant participation in community activities and organisations) and/or in the examination process.
- **Practitioner competencies** relate to generic technical skills. Like foundational competencies, you are expected to have accomplished every competency in this group. It is recognized some internships will not provide the opportunity to demonstrate all of these skills (e.g. some internships may not have a research component). However, to award a pass in the final examination, the panel must be satisfied that you have demonstrated each of these competencies at some stage during their training.
- **Specialist competencies** are those knowledge and skills specific to your role and setting. At the beginning of your internship, you will identify, with your supervisor, one or more specialist competencies. It is expected that accomplishment of these competencies will be evident in the assessment you submit.

In the following table each competency includes examples of ways in which attainment will normally be demonstrated by the intern. In relation to any one competency, it is **not** necessarily a requirement for you to have demonstrated the competency in **all** of the ways listed. Rather, the examination panel will consider the evidence available in determining whether, **overall**, you have achieved the minimum level in each competency.

Foundational Competencies

Principles and values of community psychology

The intern shall be familiar with, understand and be able to apply key principles of community psychology. This competency shall normally be demonstrated by their ability to:

- (a) Articulate key values and principles of community psychology.
- (b) Articulate psychological knowledge in a manner consistent with the best evidence available.
- (c) Apply these to the analysis of social issues in Aotearoa.
- (d) Show how their practice has been guided by them.

Cultural Safety

The intern shall practice in a culturally safe manner across a variety of settings. This competency shall normally be demonstrated by their ability to:

- (a) Understand their own cultural values and practices and how these influence the way she or he experiences the world.
- (b) Be aware of the impact of their behaviour and social positioning in relationship to people of cultures and social positioning other than their or own.
- (c) Practice in a manner which is appreciative of diverse realities.
- (d) Build collaborative relationships with people of cultures other than their own.
- (e) Recognise the need to seek appropriate cultural advice and to access such advice through supervision and professional support.

Ethical and legal appropriateness

The intern shall practice in an ethically and legally sound manner. This competency shall normally be demonstrated by an ability to:

- a) Understand and apply the Code of Ethics for Psychologists in Aotearoa.
- b) Identify ethical issues in own practice and work through a sound process of information gathering, consultation and decision making in regard to those issues.
- c) Provide a rationale for actions (conscious decision-making).
- d) Recognise the boundaries of their practice within the Health Practitioners Competence Assurance (HPCA) Act.
- e) Maintain and update their own knowledge base and personal competence.
- f) Advocate for sound ethical and legal practices.

Te Tiriti o Waitangi and bi-culturalism

The intern shall practice in a manner consistent with Te Tiriti o Waitangi. This competency shall normally be demonstrated by their ability to:

- (a) Articulate the provisions of Te Tiriti and relate them to contemporary social issues.
- (b) Understand the history of relationships between tangata whenua and the Crown.
- (c) Advocate for the implementation of treaty responsibilities.
- (d) Understand the rationale for consultation with Māori and be able to work out

- how to determine an appropriate process in their work setting(s).
- (e) Work appropriately in relation to Māori decision-making and authority structures.
- (f) Demonstrate familiarity with common Māori protocol and understand the philosophy underlying these.
- (g) Contribute to cultural justice initiatives from a clearly defined position of themselves as tangata whenua or tau iwi.

Relationship skills

The intern shall be able to develop and sustain healthy, collaborative working relationships with others, including others who differ from them in significant ways. This competency shall normally be demonstrated by their ability to:

- (a) Understand and implement the principle of reciprocity in relationships.
- (b) Develop good working relationships with others, including others who have either more or less power.
- (c) Relate effectively to people from a diverse range of backgrounds.
- (d) Handle conflict in a constructive way.
- (e) Bring to relationships the knowledge and value base of community psychology.

Reflective practice

The intern shall practice in a self-reflective manner. This competency shall normally be demonstrated by their ability to:

- (a) Critically reflect on their own practice in a process of continual improvement.
- (b) Be self-aware about their abilities and limitations and practice only within the limits of their professional competence.
- (c) Plan and monitor their workload and implement appropriate mechanisms for coping with stress.
- (d) Plan for and implement ongoing professional development.
- (e) Understand the value of supervision and to engage in regular supervision.
- (f) Seek out and maintain professional networks.

Critical, multi-level analysis

The intern shall have strong critical analysis skills, including the ability to analyse social issues at multiple levels from societal level processes to the individual level. This competency shall normally be demonstrated by their ability to:

- (a) Analyse and synthesize complex information.
- (b) Undertake well-reasoned critiques of research and scholarship relevant to their area of practice.
- (c) Undertake well-reasoned critiques of policy relevant to their area of practice.
- (d) Observe, analyse and critically reflect on community and organizational processes.
- (e) Implement ongoing evaluation based on the best evidence available.

Practitioner Competencies

Communication skills

The intern shall be able to communicate effectively, both in written and oral forms, in a wide range of settings to a variety of audiences. This competency shall normally be demonstrated by their ability to:

- (a) Produce clear, concise technical and academic reports.
- (b) Write in a direct, user-friendly manner.
- (c) Adjust their writing style for the intended audience.
- (d) Make oral presentations which can convey complex ideas in a manner which engages the audience.
- (e) Communicate in a way that encourages change.

Research skills

The intern shall be able to conduct and evaluate applied community research. This competency shall normally be demonstrated by their ability to:

- (a) Design and carry out a small scale research project in a manner appropriate for the context, including writing a proposal, completing an ethical review application, collecting and analysing both qualitative and quantitative data, and writing a report.
- (b) Critically evaluate research and give appropriate advice to others about research findings.
- (c) Write a literature review.
Understand ethical issues relating to research, including researchers' responsibilities to diverse stakeholders.

Community and organisational processes and interventions

The intern shall be able to assess community and organizational processes and to intervene appropriately in such Negotiate entry into a setting, establish professional relationships and identify key dynamics and decision-making processes.

- (a) Design processes to enhance collaboration between people with diverse interests.
- (b) Understand community development approaches and pathways for social change in accordance with the best evidence available.
- (c) Understand and promote participatory decision-making processes in communities and organizations.
- (d) Evaluate the impact of the intervention.

Specialist Competencies

Interns work in a diverse range of settings. Safe, competent practice will require the mastery of knowledge and skills specific to your role and setting. At the beginning of your internship, you will identify, with your university and/or placement supervisor/s, one or more specialist competencies. These will be expected to include:

- Specialist knowledge competencies will include a knowledge of the organisational context of your setting, regulatory frameworks (i.e. relevant legislation, regulations and policies), and research literature relevant to your area of practice. For example,

an intern working in environmental protection would be expected to be familiar with the relevant organisational context (e.g. the roles of local and regional councils, Department of Conservation, Ministry of the Environment, environmental lobby groups etc), and regulatory frameworks (e.g. Resource Management Act etc), and literature relevant to the area of resource management;

- Specialist skill competencies will include those skills, not listed as core competencies, which are specifically required for safe and effective practice in your setting. For example, an intern working as a policy analyst might need to demonstrate skills in consultation and writing policy documents over and above the more generic skills listed under Foundational and Practitioner competencies above. Similarly, an intern working as a researcher might need to demonstrate a higher degree of competency in research skills than interns working in other settings.

Appendix 4: MAppPsy – How to apply

PLEASE NOTE: Application for the MAppPsy is a two-step process, please ensure you apply when applications open in MyWaikato from early B trimester.

Selections for 2026 entry for the MAppPsy will be closing earlier than in previous years – closing date for Selections is September 15.

Essential Information

This is a two-year degree (or its equivalent part-time). It comprises taught courses and a research component. It will provide you with advanced knowledge of the underlying concepts, principles and guiding values associated with community psychology. Specific requirements are 240 points at 500 level or above, comprising:

YEAR 1

The following compulsory courses (105 points):

- [PSYCH511 Evaluation Research Design \(15pts\)](#)
- [PSYCH513 Evaluation Research Analysis \(30pts\)](#)
- [PSCYH575 Kaupapa Maori Psychologies \(15pts\)](#)
- [PSYCH582 Community Health Psychology \(15pts\)](#)
- [PSYCH583 Foundations of Community Psychology \(15pts\)](#)
- [PSYCH502 Community, Culture and Diversity \(15pts\)](#) – see note

Plus optional courses in Psychology or in other subjects such as Human Development, Anthropology, Development Studies, Screen and Media Studies, Geography, History, Sociology, Women's and Gender Studies, Demography, Philosophy, Political Science and Public (depending on your thesis/dissertation option).

Note: If you have not completed PSYCH302, you will be required to add PSYCH502 to your list of enrolled papers. Please contact the programme directly for assistance – community.psychology@waikato.ac.nz

Optional courses should be selected in consultation with the Community Psychology Programme.

YEAR 2

Completion of a thesis or dissertation.

Either a 120 point thesis (PSYCH594), a 90 point thesis (PSYCH593) is required. Unless there are particular reasons for doing otherwise, a 120 point thesis is the recommended option. Your thesis or dissertation must be on a topic that is relevant to community psychology. Normally, students complete 120 points in taught courses in the first year and a 120 point thesis in their second year. (Students who opt for a 90 point thesis in their second year would normally complete a further 30 points in taught courses.) Different patterns are possible for part-time students.

We recommend that you read copies of the current course outlines via the University website (these can be found at the bottom of the course description – links above) and communicate with one of the programme staff to discuss the suitability of the course for you. If you have any queries regarding the programme or supervision, please contact community.psychology@waikato.ac.nz

Entry requirements

In addition to fulfilling the requirements set out in the appropriate [University of Waikato regulations](#), students must meet the School of Psychological and Social Sciences requirements for entry into the programme.

The School of Psychological and Social Sciences requirements are:

YEAR 1

For entry into *the MAppPsy(Comm)* students need to **have completed a bachelor's degree with a major in psychology, and PSYCH307 Psychological Research Methods (or an equivalent)**⁷. Good preparation at undergraduate level for entry into *the MAppPsy(Comm)* includes courses which expose you to some or all of the following: the study of social issues, applied social research, biculturalism, feminist perspectives, critical psychology and social policy.

To enter the Masters programme you will need to have an average grade of at least B+ average in psychology undergraduate courses, calculated either across all your psychology courses or across your best 60 points of 300-level psychology courses⁸. (Note that directed studies cannot be included in the calculation of grade average.)

YEAR 2

Completion of the core courses (90 points) plus 30 points of approved courses with a B+ average:

- [PSYCH511 Evaluation Research Design \(15pts\)](#)
- [PSYCH513 Evaluation Research Analysis \(30pts\)](#)
- [PSCYH575 Indigenous Psychologies \(15pts\)](#)
- [PSYCH582 Community Health Psychology \(15pts\)](#)
- [PSYCH583 Foundations of Community Psychology \(15pts\)](#)
- Plus 30 points of approved courses (or 15pts if taking [PSYCH502](#))

You can also be admitted to the second year of the *MAppPsy(Comm)* if you have completed either a BSocSc(Hons) or a PGDip(Psych) with a grade average of B+ or better - and have completed (or are completing⁹) the compulsory courses listed above.

Entry is subject to the approval of the Head of the School of Psychological and Social Sciences.

⁷ If you are 30 points or less short of completing your Bachelor's degree you may be eligible for graduate study providing you have completed the requirements for your major. See the *University Calendar* for details

⁸ If you do not have at least B+ average needed to proceed directly to the *MAppPsy*, you may, enrol instead in the (generic) PGDip(Psych). Include the compulsory courses listed in Year 1 above. Achieving at least a B+ average or better across the 120 points of the PGDip(Psych) will enable you to enter the *MAppPsy* and transfer the credit points you have obtained to the Master's degree (dependant on availability of supervision in the programme).

⁹ If you have not completed all the compulsory courses, you may be able to combine outstanding courses with a 90 point thesis to make up the 120 points of the second year of the *MAppPsy*.

Further details are available from the Programme Administrator - community.psychology@waikato.ac.nz

Applying for entry

Before applying formally for entry into this programme candidates should contact the School of Psychological and Social Sciences to discuss their plans – community.psychology@waikato.ac.nz - They will be put in touch with the appropriate staff to talk about this.

Selections for 2026 entry for the MAppPsy will be closing earlier than in previous years – closing date for Selections is September 15.
Please apply in MyWaikato from B Trimester

Applications for Year 1:

Application for qualification in MyWaikato

If you are a returning student, please submit an application via MyWaikato for the MAppPsy(Comm).

If you are new to the University, please create a student account and submit the University application for the MAppPsy(Comm) via MyWaikato.

If you meet the university entry criteria, you will then be invited to complete the internal school application.

1. Internal School Application

Please complete the application form and include your most current personal details along with any other required documentation.

2. Academic Transcript/Qualifications

If you are not a graduate of the University of Waikato please upload an official transcript of your current academic record to MyWaikato.

3. Pre-requisite papers

Please indicate whether you have completed (or are completing) the core paper, in your application. The core paper is [PSYCH307](#) and recommended paper is [PSYCH302](#). If you are from another university, please ensure you provide a paper outline of the paper you have completed that is equivalent to PSYCH307.

4. Letter of Application and Written work

In this section, you are asked to upload 2 document files: a Letter of Application and a piece of written work.

Letter of Application: This letter should outline your motivations for applying to the programme.

Written Work: Please upload a document you have written in the past year. This

document should be something you wrote yourself.

- If you have completed a dissertation or thesis upload a PDF version.
- If you are, or have recently been, a student in the past year, upload a written assignment.
- If you have recently been in the workforce, upload a piece of professional writing.

Do not upload something with co-authors: you should be the only author of this document.

5. Referees

As part of your application to the MAppPsy(Comm) Year 1, you are expected to arrange ONE suitable referee who agrees to complete a Reference form before the reference deadline of October 1.

You will supply referee contact details within the MAppPsy selection form.

The Reference form link will be sent out by the programme administrator, directly to your nominated referee, after the selection form closes.

We would like to see references from the following people:

Your line manager / supervisor (work related) **OR**

An academic convenor (study related)

Avoid family, friends, relatives, or people who know you only socially rather than in terms of your academic or professional work.

Remember that referees always have the best intentions but may need to be reminded to complete the form within the appropriate time-frame – the programme will not do this for you.

Applications with FEWER THAN ONE reference will not be considered by the selection panel, so please try to ensure that your referee has completed the reference form by 1 October.

6. Criminal Convictions

Please be aware that the results of your police vetting checks and suitability checks will be considered alongside information provided in this form.

Please note: Failure to declare any convictions may result in exclusion from the Programme. All successful applicants will be required to undergo periodic police vetting by the New Zealand Police Vetting Service, as part of a Children's Worker Safety Check under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

Selections for 2026 entry for the MAppPsy will be closing earlier than in previous years – closing date for Selections is September 15.
Please apply in MyWaikato from B Trimester

Applications for Year 2:

Application for qualification in MyWaikato

If you are currently in Year 1 of the MAppPsy, you will be invited to apply for the MAppPsy Year 2 via an internal school application.

If you are new to the University, please create a student account and submit the University application for the MAppPsy(Comm) via MyWaikato.

If you meet the university entry criteria, you will then be invited to complete the internal school application.

1. Internal School Application

Please complete the application form and include your most current personal details along with any other required documentation.

2. Academic Transcript/Qualifications

If you are not a graduate of the University of Waikato please upload an official transcript of your current academic record to MyWaikato.

3. Pre-requisite papers

Please indicate whether you have completed (or are completing) the core papers, in your application. If you are from another university, please ensure you provide a paper outline of the papers you have completed that are equivalent to the core papers:

[PSYCH502 Community, Culture and Diversity](#)

[PSYCH511 Evaluation Research Design \(15pts\)](#)

[PSYCH513 Evaluation Research Analysis \(30pts\)](#)

[PSCYH575 Indigenous Psychologies \(15pts\)](#)

[PSYCH582 Community Health Psychology \(15pts\)](#)

[PSYCH583 Foundations of Community Psychology \(15pts\)](#)

4. Letter of Application and Written work

In this section, you are asked to upload 2 document files: a Letter of Application and a piece of written work.

Letter of Application: This letter should outline your motivations for applying to the programme.

Written Work: Please upload a document you have written in the past year. This document should be something you wrote yourself.

- If you have completed a dissertation or thesis upload a PDF version.
- If you are, or have recently been, a student in the past year, upload a written assignment.

- If you have recently been in the workforce, upload a piece of professional writing. Do not upload something with co-authors: you should be the only author of this document.

5. Referees

As part of your application to the MAppPsy(Comm) Year 2, you are expected to arrange TWO suitable referees who agree to complete a Reference form before the reference deadline of October 1.

You will supply referee contact details within the MAppPsy selection form.

The Reference form link will be sent out by the programme administrator, directly to your nominated referee, after the selection form closes.

We would like to see references from the following people:

Your line manager / supervisor (work related) **AND**

An academic convenor (study related)

Avoid family, friends, relatives, or people who know you only socially rather than in terms of your academic or professional work.

Remember that referees always have the best intentions but may need to be reminded to complete the form within the appropriate time-frame – the programme will not do this for you.

Applications with FEWER THAN TWO references will not be considered by the selection panel, so please try to ensure that your referee has completed the reference form by 1 October.

6. Proposed Research

Please provide relevant information on your proposed research topic and answer all of the questions in this section giving as much information as possible.

Please ensure you have created a Word or PDF document and answer all of the following questions:

What specific issue or question are you interested in?

Why do you think this topic needs research?

How would you address this issue/question?

What challenges do you foresee?

What do you plan to do when you finish your Masters studies?

7. Potential Supervisors

You are strongly advised to discuss research interests with potential supervisors within the School of Psychology (Lecturer, Senior Lecturer, Associate Professor or Professor titles only).

If you have not already done so, please get in touch and have a discussion with a potential supervisor whose research interests align with your own – [Academic Staff List](#)

8. Criminal Convictions

Please be aware that the results of your police vetting checks and suitability checks will be considered alongside information provided in this form.

Please note: Failure to declare any convictions may result in exclusion from the Programme. All successful applicants will be required to undergo periodic police vetting by the New Zealand Police Vetting Service, as part of a Children's Worker Safety Check under the Vulnerable Children Act 2014.

The Procedure We Follow

All applications are screened by the programme administrator in the first instance to ensure all documentation is included before passing the application on to the selection committee.

The selection committee will consider the applications.

The selection committee includes programme staff and practicing psychologists.

If we are not able to consider your application further, we will notify you of this as soon as possible.

Offers of admission to the programme will be extended after applications have been considered. Some offers may be made contingent on the student/you agreeing to complete further coursework. If further coursework is expected, it should usually be completed within Year 1 and you will receive a detailed offer letter from the programme regarding which courses are required.

After receiving an offer, applicants have until a specified deadline to accept the offer. After this date the offer is automatically withdrawn, and the place will be offered to another candidate. We ask that you provide us with written acceptance by email within the deadline. All unsuccessful applicants will be notified via email as soon as possible.

The panel's decision is final, and no correspondence can be entered into.

What now?

It is the potential student's responsibility to follow through with the application process and gather all required information.

Any questions about the application or programme, please contact:

community.psychology@waikato.ac.nz



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