EXCELSIA
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

COMMUNITY SERVICES AND YOUTH WORK

Established in 1983, Excelsia University College (Excelsia) is one of Australia's leading Christian higher education providers, and is an innovative and creative community of people who are passionate about excelling and growing academically, professionally, personally and spiritually. Our students and alumni embark on a journey of lifelong learning and leadership.

WORLD-CLASS MENTORSHIP

Be mentored by and learn from engaged and committed staff who are approachable and passionate about counselling.

PASTORAL CARE

Excelsia prioritises pastoral care which is fully integrated throughout the program. It is important to Excelsia that we meet the personal, social, wellbeing and academic needs of students.

ALUMNI AND INDUSTRY NETWORK

Over 3,000 alumni and accomplished academics around the world attest to our whole-of-person education.

A DEGREE WITH A DIFFERENCE

With a strong emphasis placed on student growth and experiential learning, a postgraduate degree from Excelsia will impress employers and make students' resumes pop.

OUR VISION: Excelsia contributes to making a better world through active participation in a life-transforming global Christian learning community.

OUR MISSION: Excelsia is an academic community benefiting the world by producing research characterised by exemplary scholarship consistent with a Christian world view, and graduates prepared to lead in a range of professions.

OUR VALUES

Our values reflect our vision and our mission:

1. **Christ-likeness:** striving to exemplify the life of Christ in our commitments, our actions and our relationships.
2. **Innovation and creativity:** working with passion and imagination in a range of influential professions, to further God's transformative work in the world.
3. **Scholarship:** creating a culture that values the search for truth, supports academic freedom and rewards rigorous thinking.
4. **Service to the community:** using our skills and abilities in and beyond the Institution in the service of others.
5. **Lifelong learning:** continually seeking knowledge, wisdom and capability to flourish and contribute in a changing world.

GRADUATE ATTRIBUTES

1. **Deep Knowledge**
   A deep, coherent and extensive knowledge of studied disciplines characterised by intellectual openness, creativity and curiosity.
2. **Critical Analysis**
   Willingness and ability to analyse issues logically, consider different options and viewpoints fairly, and make informed decisions in relevant artistic, academic and/or professional contexts and settings.
3. **Lifelong Learning**
   A commitment to lifelong learning characterised by a willingness and ability to acquire, develop and apply knowledge and skills that facilitate positive adaptations to a changing world.
4. **Effective Communication**
   Aptitude to communicate information, arguments and ideas effectively and ethically through writing, speech and/or artistic expression as appropriate within each discipline.
5. **Christian Ethical Action**
   A sound knowledge and understanding of Christian values and beliefs, and of the relevance of Christian faith to personal life, professional ethics, and social concerns.
6. **Self-Direction**
   A capacity for self-directed learning and activity while working effectively with others in scholarly, vocational, civic and/or artistic pursuits and endeavours.
7. **Technical Competence**
   Competence and facility with materials, processes and technologies relevant to learned disciplines, generic information literacy and professional practice.
8. **Responsible Innovation**
   Oriented towards exhibiting intellectual and artistic enterprise, innovation and independence in constructive, creative and responsible ways.

EXCELSIA RANKED HIGHLY

TEACHING QUALITY*
86.2%
National average 80.5%

POSITIVE STUDENT INTERACTIONS*
84.6%
National average 59.5%

SKILLS DEVELOPMENT*
90.7%
National average 81.1%

OVERALL GRADUATE SATISFACTION^
84.1%
National average 75.1%

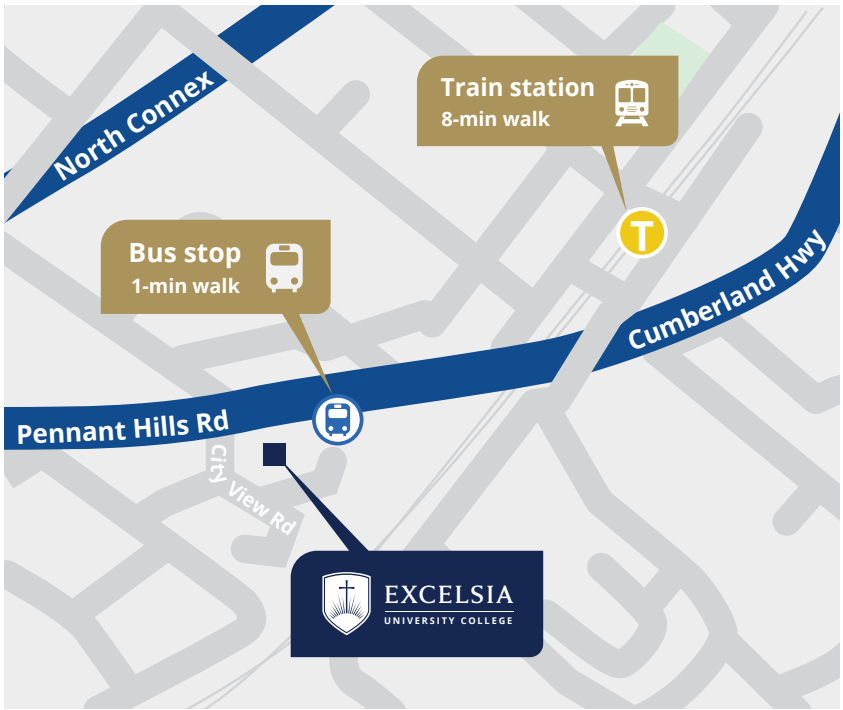
^ 2024–25 Course Experience Questionnaire (undergraduate)
* 2023–24 Student Experience Survey (undergraduate)

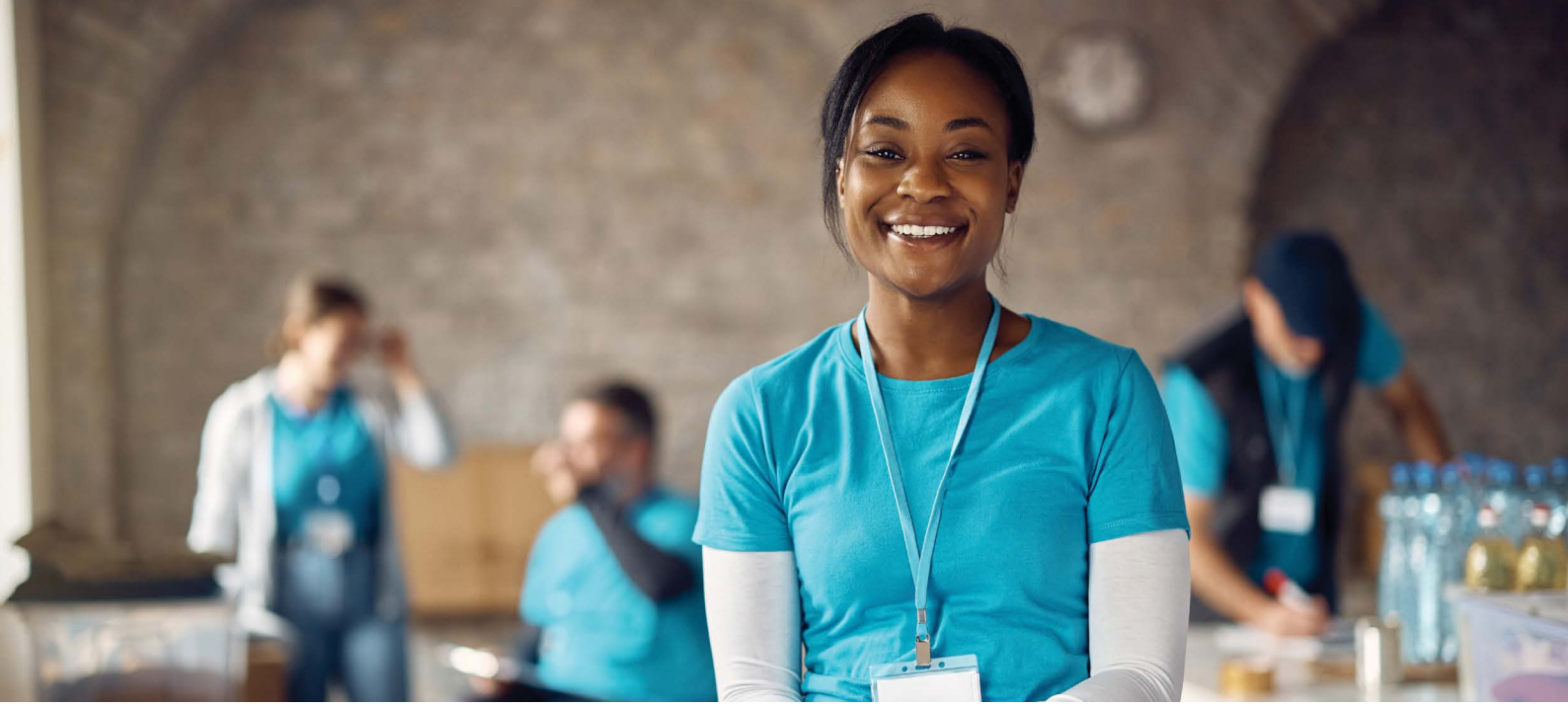
Campus facilities and convenient location

- Library
- Black box creative space
- Production studio
- Innovation centre – Mac and PC lab
- Drama and music specialist rooms
- Wellness centre
- Fidèl Café
- Koorong Bookstore
- Student facilities
  - Free wifi
  - Study desks
  - Snacks bar
  - Free coffee
  - Microwaves
  - Games console

TRANSPORT

- 8-min walk to Pennant Hills Station
- 1-min walk to bus stop
- Free parking





Master of Community Services and Youth Work

Course duration: 2 years full-time
4 years part-time (domestic students only)

Intake: February and July

Credit points: 96

Delivery: Blended

Available to: Domestic and international

IELTS: 6.5 with no band less than 6.0

CRICOS code: 115533D

Course accreditation: Community Work Australia (CWA) (provisional)

Financial information: FEE-HELP* for domestic students, international $40,000

AQF: Level 9

Community Work Australia
ACCREDITED

Work placement

400 hours in total

The Master of Community Services and Youth Work (MCSYW) is the first course in community services to be offered at postgraduate level in Australia. It is an entry qualification into the community services and youth work professions.

The course is provisionally accredited by Community Work Australia, (formerly known as the Australian Community Workers Association, or ACWA) the national peak body and professional association for community work practitioners. The MCSYW is an academic and practice-based course that promotes wellbeing for people of all ages, with a focus on youth.

This course aims to produce graduates who are professionally competent and aware of social needs, including client vulnerability and disadvantage, through their understanding of the welfare, youth and human services sectors. Students will also need to display self-awareness. For this purpose, all students in the MCSYW program undertake personal counselling (included in the course costs) throughout the course.

The course provides students with experiences of both face-to-face and online classes, as well as intensive interaction with fellow students and experienced lecturers and tutors. The learning will be delivered through lectures/seminars; workshops; case studies; in-class exercises; experiential learning strategies; written reports; oral presentations; essays; and research reports. Finally, students will explore community service practice through two field education practicums, at least one of which is in the field of youth work.

ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

EDUCATIONAL PREREQUISITES

Applicants may be admitted to the Master of Community Services and Youth Work if they have previously successfully completed a bachelor's degree or equivalent from an Australian higher education institution or approved international university at AQF Level 7.

INTERNATIONAL STUDENTS

International applicants who have not completed an educational qualification in English must provide proof of proficiency in English through internationally recognised tests such as IELTS or through satisfactory completion of an approved ELICOS course at Excelsia or one of Excelsia's partner language colleges.

Examination Minimum Scores:

- IELTS 6.5 with no band less than 6.0
- PTE Academic 58 with no score less than 50

Overseas students applying for admission to Excelsia courses must have reached the age of 18 years by the commencement of their studies. Excelsia will not admit overseas students who have not yet reached 18 years of age.

International students entering the MCSYW course will be required to complete an extended orientation if their degree was not completed in English.

ADDITIONAL SUITABILITY ASSESSMENTS

- Criminal History Record: Provide a National Criminal History Record check at time of application obtainable from: nationalcrimecheck.com.au
- Working with Children Check: Provide a Working with Children authorisation at time of application obtainable from: wwccheck.ocg.nsw.gov.au/Apply
- All students in the MCSYW course are required to engage in personal counselling provided by Excelsia (counselling interns who don't know the MCSYW students, or otherwise senior Excelsia counsellors) throughout their course for at least 12 hours (at least six hours of which should be in first year)

WHERE WILL THIS TAKE ME?

Master of Community Services and Youth Work graduates may practise in a wide range of community settings, including community development and care services, volunteer programs, residential facilities, correctional facilities, group homes, community agencies and government departments. Some careers you could consider include:

- **Community services case manager or coordinator**
  Often employed by community health centres, non-profit organisations, and government social services departments, these professionals advocate for their clients' rights, ensuring they receive comprehensive support and guidance.
- **Aboriginal community care worker**
  Employed by Aboriginal health services, community-controlled organisations, and government agencies focused on Indigenous affairs, these workers play a vital role in bridging cultural gaps and improving health outcomes through community-focused initiatives.

- **Welfare support worker**
  Employed by government welfare departments, social service agencies, and community organisations, these professionals work tirelessly to empower clients, address social inequalities, and promote sustainable livelihoods through access to welfare resources.
- **Care coordinator**
  Employed in hospitals, community health centres, residential aged care facilities, and disability support services, care coordinators play a crucial role in enhancing the quality of life and independence of their clients through comprehensive care management.
- **Youth worker**
  Found in youth centres, schools, community outreach programs, and residential facilities for youth, these professionals work collaboratively with young people, families, and community stakeholders to promote wellbeing and social inclusion among the youth population.
- **Mental health worker**

  Employed in mental health clinics, hospitals, community health centres, and non-profit organisations, these professionals promote recovery, resilience, and improved mental wellbeing through compassionate care and therapeutic interventions.
- **Corrections officer**
  Employed in prisons, juvenile detention centres, community corrections facilities, and government correctional services, these officers play a crucial role in maintaining order, promoting rehabilitation, and contributing to public safety through effective corrections management.

YEAR 1 SEMESTER 1
These units constitute the nested Graduate Certificate in Community Services.

Introduction to Counselling Skills

This unit aims to develop foundational levels of counselling competence, supported by key skills required for effective clinical practice. For example, students will be introduced to core concepts such as transference and counter-transference, which while originating in the psychodynamic psychotherapeutic domain, are now part of broader counselling discourse. In addition to acquiring the core skills, students will learn how the core skills find expression in a range of counselling modalities.

Social and Political Institutions in Australia

This unit introduces students to the key social and political institutions in Australia. While Australia was in essence 'born' a modern democracy, becoming a nation on 1 January 1901, it had both a long history of Aboriginal sovereignty and colonial invasion. Australia developed its social and political institutions within the framework of British traditions, laws, and perspectives. Australia also borrowed heavily from other democracies, particularly the USA. The unit will examine the formal political institutions that characterise Australia, focusing on the Australian Constitution, Parliament, the High Court, role of the Governor-General, Federal–State relations, etc. It will also focus on the social institutions that provide the basic framework for our wellbeing – education, health, housing, social security, employment, personal and community security.

Ethics Issues and Practice

In this unit, students learn how to ethically and responsibly manage this position, becoming conversant with all relevant regulatory codes and Australian legislative requirements that govern the health sector. They explore ethical principles in professional decision-making processes, reflect on the benefits of professional association membership, and are encouraged to be aware of and thoughtful about how their personal moral stance and ethical framework informs and influences their professional practice.

Approaches to Mental Health

Employing a biopsychosocial-spiritual framework and associated approaches, students learn about the aetiology, diagnostic presentation, assessment and evidence-based interventions for a range of mental health issues. They reflect on personal assumptions relating to mental illness, including the relationship between spirituality and mental illness, also considering how stress and vulnerability predispose some individuals to mental health episodes. Finally, they explore the role of social and family contexts in the onset of mental health disorders and their management.

YEAR 1 SEMESTER 2
Together with previous units, these units constitute the nested Graduate Diploma of Community Services.

Community Services and Welfare Systems

In this unit, students will explore the community services sector and welfare systems in Australia. Students will learn foundational concepts and theories in community service, the role of government and social policy in the provision of welfare and community services, and the important role of non-government/ not-for-profit organisations in

providing services to the very diverse population groups in Australia. Using a sociological lens, students will investigate and analyse the social determinants of health and wellbeing, and the role of community services in helping individuals, their families and/or kin to achieve the best outcomes possible. Students will learn to identify and research a range of community services agencies and organisations, and to critically reflect on the barriers and opportunities encountered by both service providers and the recipients (clients) of community service and welfare. Students will reflect on the moral, ethical and social responsibilities of community workers and – more broadly – of society as a whole, in relation to vulnerable groups. Students will consider how and why providing service to individuals and communities in need is both essential and rewarding.

Development and Diversity

Employing biopsychosocial and sociocultural lenses, students examine how humans grow and change across the lifespan, considering the contribution of developmental and sociocultural factors to normative outcomes. They examine major theories of human development, including the interface between the individual and their broader historical, sociocultural context. They consider how the spiritual domain affects development for those with a faith world view, and how different experiences of society and culture, including factors such as racism, bias and discrimination, oppression, power and privilege, and prejudice can adversely affect individual development and present as clinical issues. Finally, students develop an awareness of socially and culturally sensitive counselling practice.

Leadership and Community Development

This unit first introduces students to theories and practices of leadership and management, and their application to sound agency management and case management. This unit also builds on the concepts of community services frameworks in Australia. It introduces students to community development principles and the conceptual approaches to building active and sustainable communities for the purpose of enhancing a community's social, economic and environmental goals. A community development approach can be applied to many areas of community service organisations, including education, health, welfare systems, employment, government legislation, policies and planning, public housing, and disadvantaged groups, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander communities.

The topics in this unit critically analyse the key principles and foundations of community development and the concepts of capacity building, empowerment, equal access, equity and how to develop and integrate these into communities.

Research Methods

This unit aims to equip students to become knowledgeable consumers of a professional body of research, and to become aware of key interpretative issues relevant to research more generally. In order to equip students in this way, this unit introduces students to a range of philosophical, theoretical and practical skills and understandings necessary to design, conduct and evaluate research. Further, to be able to critically evaluate the relevance of specific contemporary research findings for professional practice, students need to be conversant with how knowledge is produced and is deemed to be acceptable by a professional community. Thus, acquiring an understanding of the core elements of the research process and research ethics enables students to discern whether and how specific findings may inform their clinical decision-making and client care.

YEAR 2 SEMESTER 1

Social Work Practice in Groups and Communities

The unit explores social work practice in groups and communities. The

theories and skills in group work are examined and developed with attention to therapeutic group work, self-help groups, teamwork and community organising. Students will explore the theoretical frameworks and practical skills for group and community work. The unit focuses on assessing the needs for a group, understanding group formation, development and processes, and closure.

Fieldwork 1

The unit provides students the opportunity to put theory into practice in an organisational context with the knowledge and skills required to perform as a community services professional, under professional guidance and supervision. Consisting of 200 hours, the field education practicum can be across a range of settings within the social and community services sector. This may include, but is not limited to, community centres, community services, child and family services, community development, community work, child protection, family violence, alcohol and other drugs, youth work, juvenile justice, policy and planning. While completing the practicum, students will integrate theory, acquired during course work, with practice, and develop their ability in a range of community services settings and fields of practice. This is the first of two field education practicums designed to ensure that students meet the requirements of the Community Work Australia (CWA) Practice Guidelines (2025) and Code of Ethics (2025).

Introduction to Counselling Children and Young People

This unit introduces attendees to the theoretical knowledge and clinical skills associated with counselling children and young people, including a range of individual, family, creative and group therapies, and learning how to appropriately select from among these therapies so as to optimise intervention strategies applied to individual clients. The unit is situated within a broader socio-ecological approach to counselling children and young people, emphasising the importance of social and cultural contexts central to client health and wellbeing (e.g. family, educational and community systems, etc.), and addressing how working with these systems is crucial for welfare, functioning and recovery of the individual child or young person. Utilising a strengths-based approach, the unit focuses on key issues such as developmental crises, disability, trauma, emotional and behavioural problems, and environmental issues. It examines how these conditions and circumstances may adversely affect clients' physical, psychological, social, and spiritual wellbeing and their educational attainments. Concurrently, the unit offers a mental health focus emphasising prevention, early intervention and crisis management of identified at-risk populations of children and young people.

Trauma, Grief and Loss

Loss and change are a normal aspects of the human experience, encountered by all individuals at some point in their lives. Trauma may manifest if individuals experience loss and grief. This unit examines historical and contemporary approaches to understanding advanced trauma, loss and grief. It provides students with assessment and intervention skills to work effectively in these areas of counselling. Students apply theory to assess case studies and in role-plays. The topics of vicarious trauma and burnout, and the development of self-care plans are also examined. Appropriate consideration of clients' cultural and spiritual heritages will also be explored.

YEAR 2 SEMESTER 2

Child, Youth and Family Social Work Practice

The unit focus is on developing skills in working with children, youth and families. It considers challenges that children, young people and families may experience, including physical abuse, neglect, child sexual assault, emotional abuse, family violence, trauma, and poverty. Students will develop skills in complex assessment, planning and intervention with high need or complex service users. Protective factors and strengths of diverse families, including Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders, are also explored. Services and organisations along a spectrum from prevention to treatment are identified and discussed.

Fieldwork 2

The unit provides students the opportunity to put theory into practice in an organisational context with the knowledge and skills required to perform as a community services professional, under professional guidance and supervision.

Consisting of 200 hours, the field education practicumallows a student to integrate theory into practice through a range of community and human services experiences. The practicum can be across a range of settings within the social and community services sector. This may include, but is not limited to, community centres, community services, child and family services, community development, community work, child protection, family violence, alcohol and other drugs, youth work, juvenile justice, and welfare organisations.

This is the second of two field education practicums designed to ensure that students meet the requirements of the Community Work Australia (CWA) Practice Guidelines (2025) and Code of Ethics (2025).

As per CWA guidelines, placement will be undertaken in a different field of practice and with a different agency supervisor than students' first practicum. Student placements are coordinated by the Excelsia University College placements team.

ELECTIVES

Students select two electives from the list below.

Social Work Practice with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples and Communities

The unit has a focus on building skills and knowledge of working with Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and communities. Working with these communities is an important field of practice for social workers in community contexts as well as statutory ones. The unit critically analyses the history of the relationship between social work, human services and Aboriginal and Torres Straits Islander peoples. Partnership models of helping are to be developed through collaboration and building skills in working with and engaging communities. This involves developing practice principles, strategies and skills.

Introduction to Working Cross-Culturally

This unit provides students the opportunity to develop skills and strategies in working with diverse populations. Using a cross-cultural framework, students explore mental health stressors amongst multicultural populations. Students examine their own cultural identity and apply cross-cultural competencies across a range of workshop activities. In considering the client's culture, the student must understand their own cultural values and how they shape individual biases and prejudices. An assessment of the student's own biases is essential to helping people from other cultures.

Professional Project

This unit provides students an opportunity to pursue a unique research project, the result of which is a written or creative work of around 5,000 words (or equivalent). The project will be positioned within the counselling, community services or youth work professions. Professional projects will be informed by relevant theory, literature and research, and will demonstrate the ethical and technical requirements of the discipline. Students may work independently or within a group, employing flexibility and sound judgement.

Person-centred Support in Disability

This unit introduces the contemporary landscape of person-centred support and develops understanding of systems, services and practices of contemporary disability support. It explores the genesis and development of person-centredness as an approach to policy and practice in disability and examines how this maps to the nature and structure of the Australian disability service system. Knowledge will be developed about the range of service types, the disability workforce and the diversity of service users and their support needs, and applied to real world settings. Characteristics of the range of models of support, assistive technologies and support relationships (both formal and informal), are explored in order to develop a deep understanding of the issues that people with disability and those who support them experience in the support encounter. Key frameworks underpinning disability support in the context of the National Disability Insurance Scheme and beyond, including safeguarding, service quality and practice standards will be explored to promote understanding of best practice in person-centred support.

Introduction to Working with Addictions

Using a range of methods, this unit provides a framework for addictive behaviours, including addiction to alcohol and other drugs. The aim is to develop skills in assessment related to addictive behaviours and relevant approaches when working with this population. The evidence for and against selected techniques is analysed. The principles of working with the voluntary and non-voluntary client is explored.

Research Project

In this unit, students focus on their individual research activity, covering areas such as data collection, data analysis and research write-up and presentation. In doing so, they will experience research in situ, including the day-to-day challenges of managing a small research project. Students will be expected to synthesise theoretical and clinical literature, and their individual endeavours will culminate in the preparation and submission of a 5,000-word research paper.

Development of Aged Care Theories, and Interventions with Elderly People

This unit examines the biological, psychological, social, and critical gerontological theories that have guided aged care practice. A range of theories will be explored from their development to their current impact upon older people within community and residential aged care. Students will be encouraged to evaluate theories and understand the dynamic interplay of systemic issues associated with these theories.

Delivery of aged care has been shaped not just by theories, but also by their interpretation within a socio-cultural context. Theories need to be critically examined to underpin progressive practice and facilitate theory building.

There is considerable diversity within the ageing population, and this has fostered the development of transdisciplinary theories. A range of theories will be highlighted throughout this unit, illustrating the interwoven nature of theory and practice.

Criminality

Studying criminality within the context of a community services course offers students a nuanced understanding of the social dynamics and challenges that communities face. This unit explores topics such as the psychobio and socio-economic determinants of crime, the criminal justice system, victim support services, and crime prevention strategies. Specifically, students learn the various intersecting factors such as gender, age, mental illness, and race as they relate to crime. By examining these topics through a lens of social justice and equity, students will develop the skills and awareness needed to advocate for inclusive and culturally responsive approaches to addressing criminality within diverse communities.

Introduction to Family Systems and Couples

This unit examines the historical origins and contemporary applications of systemic work with families and couples therapy. It examines how the dynamics that operate between family members may contribute to symptoms experienced by vulnerable family members, particularly children and young people. Developmental and contextual factors are examined to take a transgenerational view of family functioning. Theoretical and practical applications of multiple models of family and couples therapy are presented, which provide students the opportunity to develop skills to effectively assess and intervene with families and couples that present for counselling.

Graduate Certificate in Community Services

Course duration: 6 months full-time
1 year part-time (domestic students only)

Intake: February and July

Credit points: 24

Delivery: Blended

Available to: Domestic and international

IELTS: 6.5 with no band less than 6.0

CRICOS code: 115560A

Financial information: FEE-HELP* for domestic students, international $10,000

AQF: Level 8

This course offers an introduction into the background knowledge required to understand and ultimately work in community services. Students are taught core counselling skills, ethical requirements of the profession, presenting client mental health issues, and social and political systems in Australia.

Graduate Diploma of Community Services

Course duration: 1 year full-time
2 years part-time (domestic students only)

Intake: February and July

Credit points: 48

Delivery: Blended

Available to: Domestic and international

IELTS: 6.5 with no band less than 6.0

CRICOS code: 115561M

Financial information: FEE-HELP* for domestic students, international $20,000

AQF: Level 8

The Graduate Diploma of Community Services provides the foundation in knowledge and skills for a community worker. In the first semester, students are taught core counselling skills, ethical requirements of the profession, presenting client mental health issues, and social and political systems in Australia. In the second semester, students are introduced to the welfare sector in Australia, theories of human development and diversity, leadership and community development, and research methods in the social sciences.

Information about applications is available at: excelsia.edu.au/application-guide

Step 1
Select the course
at: excelsia.edu.au/study/

Step 2
Check entry requirements

Step 3
Gather the required documents

Step 4
Complete application form

Step 5
Apply

Once you submit your application, Excelsia staff will contact you shortly to confirm receipt and talk through the next steps in the process.

EXCELSIA
UNIVERSITY COLLEGE

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TEQSA PRV12064
CRICOS CODE 02664K

The information contained in this course guide was accurate at the time of publication. Excelsia reserves the right to amend the material contained in this guide without notice in response to changing circumstances or for any other reason.
For most up-to-date course information please visit our website.

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