Dear Bachelor Students,

I am writing to provide you with further information about the updated Bachelor courses in the School of Counselling and their necessary transition arrangements. I firstly wish to apologise on behalf of ACAP and acknowledge that the news of the need to transition into the updated courses has raised some confusion and concerns. I hope the information below addresses the bulk of these concerns, and goes some way to explaining the context in which these changes have been made, the nature of the changes, and the detail of the transition arrangements to the Bachelor of Applied Social Science, Bachelor of Counselling and the Bachelor of Counselling (Coaching).

If you require further information or are concerned by the changes, I encourage you to get in touch with us. A list of relevant contacts for specific queries can be found at the bottom of this letter, and general enquiries can be directed to the Student Recruitment team:

   Phone 1800 061 199 (press 1)
   Email info.acap@navitas.com

Context of the Change - Reaccreditation

All higher education courses in Australia undergo regular reaccreditation cycles. This cycle normally leads to an update of content, inclusion of new professional accreditation requirements, and the addition/removal of units. Unit names also change to more accurately reflect content.

For ACAP, our courses are assessed and accredited by the national regulator, the Tertiary Education Quality Standards Agency (TEQSA). TEQSA reviews all aspects of the course, including legislative compliance, content, learning and occupational outcomes, and delivery modes. Courses are also accredited by relevant professional bodies such as the Psychotherapy and Counselling Federation of Australia (PACFA).

Reaccreditation is a significant undertaking and involves a great deal of consultation. For example, student feedback collected in week 12 Unit and Teacher evaluations and through annual Student Satisfaction Surveys is considered. Further, courses are benchmarked against other similar university courses to reflect the latest academic and professional standards, and meet the requirements of the current Australian Qualifications Framework (AQF). This process also ensures the qualification is recognised by employers and reputable education providers in Australia and across the globe.

Notifying students of the change

ACAP’s Bachelor courses were required to be accredited by June 2014. ACAP can only make explicit to prospective and current students information about changes to accredited courses once they have been confirmed by TEQSA. The School of Counselling informed students of the arrangements of these updated courses soon after receipt of the related confirmation by TEQSA.

Teach-out

The College determined that teach-out was not an appropriate path to follow for a number of reasons:

1. It is a legal option to transfer students into reaccredited degrees, and this option has been approved by the national regulator (TEQSA).
2. Teach-out, by law, can only be for a maximum period of two years. This would provide significant course completion problems for many students.
3. Student feedback indicated content needed to be more contemporary.
4. The reaccredited degrees meet the 2014 PACFA Training Standards.
Accreditation Status of Your Current Course
Students who complete their course during Trimester 2 this year will graduate with the current course title. These courses are, where relevant, PACFA accredited and this accreditation will be recognised. Those students who need to complete non-unit course requirements (such as placement and/or workshops) should contact the School to explore completion options to facilitate graduation under the current course titles.

Benefits of the Change
ACAP has carefully considered the renewed courses, which present the following benefits to students:
- Updated curriculum
- Compliance with the 2014 PACFA Training Standards
- Refined delivery mode, to enhance improved student outcomes, and
- More focused and industry-relevant course titles

Student and External Feedback
As part of the course review process, student and external feedback was considered in the design and naming of the courses. Student feedback was collected via Week 12 Unit and Teacher evaluations and through annual Student Satisfaction Surveys. Feedback focused on the following themes: currency of content; diversity of assessment methods, and course title currency.

External expert feedback was also collected via a Course Advisory Committee. This included experts from other universities, the profession, and accrediting bodies. This group advised on course content and structure, occupational outcomes, and industry relevance. The courses were also endorsed by the Academic Board which includes external senior academics and student representatives. This feedback was instrumental in shaping the new courses.

Recognition of Existing Course Titles and Credit Value
It is important to note that for students who transition from one degree version to another, their transcripts will record the change in course title and will also list the units under the title of the original degree in which they were completed and then list the additional units under the title of the updated degree. This means that the details of the course of study (e.g., social science, counselling, etc.) will be provided and acknowledged. For those concerned that a change in course title may affect their industry choices on graduation, a letter explaining and supporting the range and type of units studied will also be available.

As the updated degrees are a more current version of the existing degrees, earned credit will be maintained. For example, 12 units completed will be credited with 12 units. The earned credit of units completed in the current degrees will be transferred to the new degrees; no unit credit gained in the present degree will be lost in the program transfer to the new degree, no unit completed previously is redundant when the same program type is continued, and the transition will not impact your GPA. The only time that a student might potentially be required to do some additional units is if they transfer into a program of a different award discipline type (e.g. counselling to social science); however, this would have been the case before the updating of programs and the subsequent transfer.

Student Placements
The arrangement for Student placements varies depending on the degree program. For those studying social science and coaching, all placement experiences completed are transferred into the
renewed degrees. For those in the counselling program (specialisation) placement experience will be acknowledged by ACAP. Please note that the placement hours are reducing from 400 to 250 hours in the revised degrees. With regards to placement, we will contact you to discuss your individual circumstances and options.

**Blended Learning and On-Campus Requirements**
Some of the units in the new program will be delivered via blended learning. This is because the training standards governing counsellor training in Australia (PACFA) require students to gain sufficient person-to-person contact hours within their study program, making it necessary for counselling students to attend campus. This requirement existed previously and was accommodated by the College through the Counsellor Development Workshops (CDWs). Blended learning is a highly recommended approach to learning and provides the benefits of both online learning (for example, flexibility) and person-to-person contact and interaction. Research consistently reports that students gain better learning outcomes from blended learning than through purely online learning. The College’s blended learning model has been commended by TEQSA. As such we have replaced CDWs with blended learning units. The College aims to schedule the on campus components of those units which are delivered via blended learning in ways that minimise student travel and which provide maximum support for students.

**What the Regulator Said About the New Courses**
In assessing the new courses, TEQSA provided feedback to ACAP on many aspects of course design. The feedback was very positive. For example, they commented that the content of the courses of study is drawn from a substantial, coherent and current body of knowledge and scholarship in the fields of Social Science, Counselling, Psychology and Coaching and includes the study of relevant theoretical frameworks and research findings.

**Need Further Information?**
- **Contact the Student Recruitment team** if you are considering to change into a different stream and would like help with your decision:
  Phone 1800 061 199 (press 1)
  Email info.acap@navitas.com
- **Contact the school** if you are transitioning into the equivalent course that you are currently enrolled in and if you have questions about credits or any other aspects of the change:
  Email undergrad@acap.edu.au
- **Attend an information session** on campus or online- visit the website for times and dates.
- Refer to the **Frequently Asked Questions** document which is regularly updated.

I do hope that this update has provided you with sufficient information at this time to make the changes more understandable for you.

Please do contact us via the relevant channels for specific queries you may have so that we can address concerns individually.

Kind regards

Andrew Little
Principal & Executive General Manager
Australian College of Applied Psychology