



## Mental Health for Teaching Professions

Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma



# Graduate Certificate and Graduate Diploma in Mental Health for Teaching Professions

These courses were developed jointly by the School of Psychology, Psychiatry and Psychological Medicine and the Faculty of Education, Monash University. They are offered via off-campus learning (distance education) and are administered through the School of Psychology, Psychiatry and Psychological Medicine.

The courses are open to teachers and other school-support staff interested in emotional/behavioural aspects of child development and aim to assist classroom teachers to identify and manage early signs of mental health difficulties in children and adolescents. The courses are also designed to help teachers in their communication with school support staff, such as psychologists and speech pathologists.

Assessments are essay/case-study based and students are also expected to participate in online discussion with peers and Monash teaching staff, via threaded discussion groups. Significant IT support and guidance is provided to assist students who are not familiar with internet-based learning.



## Professional accreditation

The graduate diploma is recognised by the Victorian Institute of Teaching as an accredited fourth year.

## Teaching staff

Staff who teach in these programs are experienced education and mental health professionals. The course coordinator is Dr Pamela Snow, who is both a psychologist and speech pathologist. Other teaching staff include: a teacher (qualified at primary, secondary and special education levels), a clinical psychologist and two child psychotherapists. All have a detailed understanding of the complexity of the school classroom environment and the challenges faced by teachers in dealing with emotional and behavioural difficulties.

## Scholarships

The Victorian Department of Education and Early Childhood Development (DEECD) may provide a 50 per cent bursary to teachers in Victorian government schools who enrol in the graduate diploma, (ie two years of study). The number of bursaries available is strictly limited.

## Fees

Please contact the course administrator for current course fees.

## Admission requirements

Students are normally required to possess at least a three-year qualification in teaching. In some circumstances, ancillary staff who work in schools may also be considered for admission into the course; in such cases, post-secondary qualification(s) and relevant professional experience will be taken into consideration.

## The application process

Details on the application process can be obtained from the course administrator on (03) 9594 1478 or via email to: [gcmhpt@med.monash.edu.au](mailto:gcmhpt@med.monash.edu.au)

Applications should be lodged by 30 November in the year preceding intended commencement. Students wishing to apply for DEECD bursaries should apply via the annual application process coordinated by the department and these should be submitted by 31 October. For information about this application process, contact Mr David Billimoria on: (03) 9637 3775 or via email to: [billimoria.david.p@edumail.vic.gov.au](mailto:billimoria.david.p@edumail.vic.gov.au)

# Course structure

The graduate certificate comprises two core-units, completed over one calendar year (ie two semesters), that cover both theoretical and practical issues in understanding and managing common emotional and behavioural issues that arise in the typical classroom/school setting.

## MHT0001 Understanding mental development – child to adolescent

The three learning modules in this unit cover psychological development, the sociology of childhood and adolescence, and principles of communication, intervention and referral in the school setting. On completion of this unit students will have:

- a significant grounding in theoretical perspectives of child and adolescent development;
- a knowledge of developmental stages and transitions; and
- an understanding of the impact of development on a child's sense of self, relationship with family and others and with educationalists.

## MHT0002 Mental health – practical considerations

The three learning modules in this unit include specific psychiatric and psychological syndromes, interventions in the classroom and school, and a case study discussion of classroom difficulties. On completion of this unit students will:

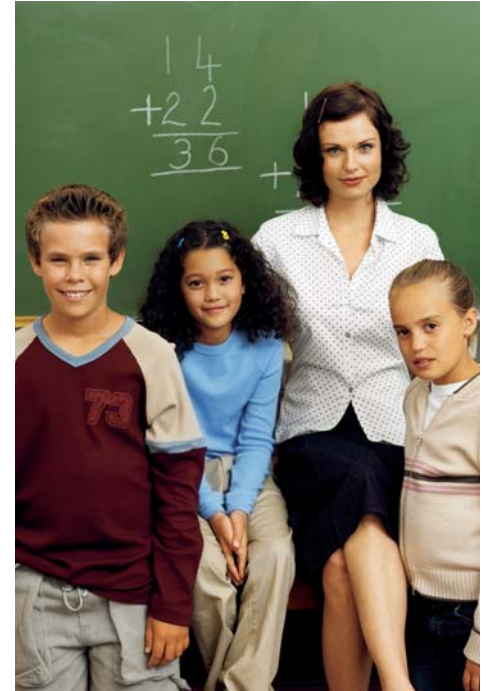
- have a grounding in and an understanding of practical measures that can be adopted in the school in response to perceived emotional difficulties in the individual child;
- be able to differentiate between difficulties that can be managed within the school setting and those that require further referral; and
- have a working knowledge of procedures that they can adopt to effect such referrals.

A graduate diploma year follows the graduate certificate, and comprises two further core units that outline counselling techniques for teachers and address organisational and group aspects of the school environment that impact on student welfare. The graduate certificate must be successfully completed before students can enrol in the graduate diploma.

## MHT0004 Organisational and group aspects of the school environment

On completion of this unit, students will have significant grounding in observation method and the role of participant observer, increased capacity to reflect on and manage in their own roles at school, a capacity to understand and analyse group dynamics in the classroom, the school, and the wider educational system, and knowledge of factors that foster a learning environment at school. On completion of this unit students will:

- gain skills in observation method in the role of participant observer, and a capacity for self reflection;
- gain knowledge and understanding of the parameters of their own roles as teachers, including matters of responsibility, accountability and authority to act, and physical and psychological boundaries related to roles and territories in a school;
- develop an understanding of dynamics of relationships between teachers and other members of a school community, from the perspective of psychoanalytic systems and sociological conceptual frameworks;
- increase awareness of their own responses and behaviours in small and large groups;
- develop a capacity to analyse group dynamics in school systems, including differences in small and large groups, from the perspective of established conceptual frameworks;
- develop an increased understanding of typical fears within a school community, and a capacity to identify work practices that function to defend against associated anxieties;
- gain knowledge of factors that help to create a learning environment in classrooms and the wider school community; and
- demonstrate a capacity to observe and to analyse group dynamics in the field, and to communicate findings orally and in a written report.



## MHT0003 Counselling techniques for members of the teaching profession

On completion of this unit students will have acquired a knowledge of practical counselling skills and had some experience in using them. They will also learn about the phases of change which individuals go through in the process of first becoming aware of a problem to its resolution. As the counselling of children and adolescents raises questions related to development, students will gain some knowledge of personality development and how different personal styles affect counselling. Objectives of this unit are to:

- increase knowledge about the nature of counselling and its applications in educational settings;
- develop skills in conceptualising presentations;
- improve basic skills in engaging and counselling troubled people in acute and chronic situations; and
- develop a plan to evaluate interventions and develop plans for future counselling.

## Student testimonials

“As with many things in life, when you work hard to achieve the desired result, it is a rewarding experience. MHT0004 has much to offer those teachers who want to better understand the dynamics of individual and group behaviour. You do get the ‘eureka feeling’ when new learning can be directly applied to the work we do in the teaching profession. My approach with the more challenging students in our school, continues to be more informed and has had improved outcomes for all concerned. The course offers challenging readings that extend your theoretical base, thoughtful questions to think things through each week, a collegiate weekend to meet other like minded professionals and ongoing TDG to which you tend to become ‘hooked into’ regularly.

The commitment of time to managing the unit requirements, and therefore achieve the outcomes of the unit, is significant. Be prepared to be challenged and confused while wrestling with new concepts. I have found help is always available. If you have the time to study and want to better understand the way individuals and groups behave this course has much to offer.”

### **Kerry, primary school principal**

“I have found the unit on organisational health incredibly stimulating and with respect to observations within my own environment, very enlightening. The articles we have had the privilege to read as part of this unit give me enormous confidence regarding the difference we as a group of individuals can make within our own schools and the education system.

Having the support and discussion groups is of incredible importance in my quest to try and effect change in my workplace. Hearing different perspectives and in particular the positive highlights of people’s work as well as the differing opinions has made this unit invaluable in terms of reassessing situations, feeling confident to make a mark and understanding why educational environments must change to meet the needs of all students.”

### **Ann, secondary school welfare officer**

As a classroom teacher in a primary school, I have found this course to be a highly valuable tool in dealing with the well being of my students. The mental health of our students is paramount to their learning and to their successful integration in to the wider world. I am so much more aware of the impact of mental health on the overall success of the child in the school environment. This course has helped me to understand more deeply how humans interact with one another, what drives their behaviours and how school structures can support and/or inhibit this development.

My perception of teaching has changed. I am so much more aware of the individual as an entire and whole human being. For them, school is just one part of a life that extends beyond the boundaries of the school gate. Their experiences outside of its realm may be far more challenging than we want to imagine, but these experiences are real and need to be acknowledged, understood and accepted as such.

One of the real positives of this course for me has been the collegiality which has developed between my fellow students. We hail from various school settings and it has been a joy and an honour to learn with such passionate people who really do care about young people. Our lecturers too have willingly shared their expertise and have been diverse enough to provide us with various points of view and a breadth of knowledge. They have supported and encouraged us to think beyond just what we see in the classroom and on the playground.

I strongly recommend this course to all teachers. It has opened my mind and I feel that I will be a better teacher because of it.

### **Sharon, primary school teacher**

## Further information

If you have questions you would like to discuss or wish to lodge your application, please contact:

### **Course administrator**

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School of Psychology, Psychiatry  
and Psychological Medicine  
Monash Medical Centre  
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Clayton, VIC 3168

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