

Psychology Major
Revised Assessment Plan
January, 2014

I. Learning Statement

The Psychology Major advances students' understanding of the scientific study of behavior and experience in humans and other animals. Through classroom activities, as well as continual and incremental immersion in hands-on research, the curriculum a) introduces students to the methods of investigation, conceptual analysis, and application most characteristic of a wide range of subdisciplines in psychology; b) develops students' mastery of the specific theories and methodologies in one or more subdisciplines; and c) cultivates an appreciation for the context of psychological science by examining its cultural, social, and/or political dimensions. In this way, the psychology major prepares students for successful graduate education in the behavioral sciences and promotes the skills and knowledge necessary for students to become critical thinkers, strong communicators, and lifelong learners.

II. Department Learning Goals and Outcomes

Goal 1:

Students will become broadly knowledgeable about the scientific study of behavior and experience in humans and other animals.

Outcome 1: Students will demonstrate knowledge of fundamental principles in psychology, including key concepts in at least three different subdisciplines drawn from both of the following groups: cognitive / learning / neuroscience / perception; clinical / developmental / personality / social.

Goal 2:

Students will understand the methods, conceptual analysis, applications, and means of communication most common in psychological science.

Outcome 2: Students will demonstrate an understanding of a variety of methods common in psychological science, and their strengths and weaknesses.

Outcome 3: Students will demonstrate the skills required to make informed methodological decisions in the context of their own research projects.

Outcome 4: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the dynamic and interdependent relationship between empirical results and theory development.

Outcome 5: Students will demonstrate the skills required to communicate effectively by writing in APA style, and presenting orally in a conference-like setting.

Goal 3:

Students will demonstrate mastery of the specific theories and methodologies in one or more specialized areas in psychology

Outcome 6: Students will demonstrate both a mastery of the key concepts, findings, methodologies, and controversies in at least one specialized area of psychology, and the ability to critique and synthesize that scholarship.

Goal 4:

Students will appreciate the context of psychological science by examining its cultural, social, and/or political dimensions.

Outcome 7: Students will demonstrate a greater awareness of the broader cultural, social, and/or political dimensions that influence human behavior and experience.

III. Department Assessment Strategies

Outcome 1: Students will demonstrate knowledge of fundamental principles in psychology, including key concepts in at least three different subdisciplines drawn from both of the following groups: cognitive / learning / neuroscience / perception; clinical / developmental / personality / social.

Assessed in senior year through the Psychology Major Survey (PMS), administered to all students each year. The PMS will also be administered to all Introductory Psychology students during the first week of the semester, and then again on the last week of the semester in an attempt to obtain a baseline to help senior performance on the test.

Outcome 2: Students will demonstrate an understanding of a variety of methods common in psychological science, and their strengths and weaknesses.

Assessed in senior year through PMS, administered to all students each year.

Outcome 3: Students will demonstrate the skills required to make informed methodological decisions in the context of their own research projects.

Assessed through rubric applied to Directed Research papers.

Outcome 4: Students will demonstrate an understanding of the dynamic and interdependent relationship between empirical results and theory development.

Assessed through rubric applied to Directed Research papers.

Outcome 5: Students will demonstrate the skills required to communicate effectively by writing in APA style, and presenting orally in a conference-like setting.

Assessed through rubric applied to student-led component of advanced coursework and to oral presentation of Directed Research project.

Outcome 6: Students will demonstrate both a mastery of the key concepts, findings, methodologies, and controversies in at least one specialized area of psychology, and the ability to critique and synthesize that scholarship.

Assessed by rubric applied to final paper for one advanced student, as selected by the student.

Outcome 7: Students will demonstrate a greater awareness of the broader cultural, social, and/or political dimensions that influence human behavior and experience.

Assessed by rubric applied to final paper for UP3 classes, as selected by the student.

May also be assessed through Psych Subject Test.

IV. Four-Year Timeline to Implement Assessment Strategies

2014

Our Spring 2014 assessments will include exit interviews with seniors, the pre- and post-Intro Psychology Major Survey (PMS), and the PMS for exiting seniors. In Fall 2014 we will process and assess final papers from UP3 classes, in addition to administering the pre- and post-Intro PMS. PMS results from the past year at the three test points (before intro; after intro; senior year) will be analyzed and interpreted.

2015

Spring 2015 assessments will include exit interviews with seniors, the pre- and post-Intro Psychology Major Survey (PMS), and the PMS for exiting seniors. In Fall 2015 we will process and assess final papers from Directed Research classes, in addition to administering the pre- and post-Intro PMS. PMS results from the past year at the three test points (before intro; after intro; senior year) will be analyzed and interpreted.

2016

Spring 2016 assessments will include exit interviews with seniors, the pre- and post-Intro Psychology Major Survey (PMS), and the PMS for exiting seniors. In Fall 2016 we will process and assess final papers from Student-Led classes, in addition to administering the pre- and post-Intro PMS. PMS results from the past year at the three test points (before intro; after intro; senior year) will be analyzed and interpreted.

2017

Spring 2017 assessments will include exit interviews with seniors, the pre- and post-Intro Psychology Major Survey (PMS), and the PMS for exiting seniors. In Fall 2017 we will return to assessing final papers from UP3 classes, in addition to administering the pre- and post-Intro PMS. PMS results from the past year at the three test points (before intro; after intro; senior year) will be analyzed and interpreted. PMS results from the past year at the three test points (before intro; after intro; senior year) will be analyzed and interpreted.

Responsibilities

The Psychology Department chair will work with the department coordinator to maintain portfolios for all students that include their Directed Research paper, Context and Culture project, and advanced course project. Responsibilities for revising and applying the rubrics will be shared among faculty with particular expertise in the relevant goal area. The chair will be responsible for maintaining a spreadsheet with the assessment data on the Psychology Faculty secure website (through MoodleGroups).