

2016-2017 Assessment Summary Report

Psychology Program Learning Goals Set

Learning Goal 1: Knowledge Base of Psychology

Demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.

Learning Outcome 1.1: Breadth and Depth of Psychology

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding representing an appropriate breadth and depth in selected content areas of psychology.

▼ Measure: Major Fields Test

Describe the type and source of evidence being used for this measure of the learning outcome (e.g., a randomly selected representative subset of senior capstone papers from COL 101): We will be using a standardized multiple choice national test (The Major Fields Test) that covers major theories, content areas, and applications of psychology.

Identify a target (or benchmark) level at which the Program would like to see students achieve this outcome (e.g., at least 80% of students will receive an average rating of...): We want at least 80% of our senior students to achieve an overall score at or greater than the 50th percentile.

Describe how this assessment will be/was carried out, including how the measure will be/was analyzed/assessed: Each semester, all graduating seniors are asked to take this assessment during one of several scheduled testing periods. The test is administered in a controlled environment to prevent cheating or compromising the test questions. Once completed, tests are automatically scored by Educational Testing Services (ETS) Individual score reports are provided to students immediately upon completion. A comprehensive report on all students (including their overall percentile using a national normative sample) is also provided to the program.

Supporting Attachments:

 Major Fields Test - Psychology Exam Description.pdf (Adobe Acrobat Document)

Findings for Major Fields Test


Summary of Findings: In all, 13 graduating senior psychology students completed the Major Fields Test for Psychology. 76% of these students scored at or above the 50th percentile. For the 24% who scored lower than the 50th percentile, there seemed to be a common weakness in the Developmental Psychology area relative to the rest of their performance.

Results: Target Achievement: Not Met

Provide a summary of how the findings/results from this measure are being used by the program to improve student learning of this particular learning outcome: Based on these findings, we have replaced some content in the History and Systems of Psychology capstone course to now include a stronger review of Developmental theory and applications. The content that was displaced appears to be receiving more than adequate coverage and reinforcement in at least two of our 200-level courses, so we expect no drop-off in learning to occur with respect to that content.

Describe how and when the Program will reassess the(se) action(s) to know whether or not the action(s) had the desired impact: This SLO is slated to be (re)assessed in the third academic year (2018-19) of this current assessment cycle.

Substantiating Evidence:

 MFT Score Report for May 2016 Graduating Seniors.xlsx (Excel Workbook (Open XML))

Learning Goal 2: Research Methods in Psychology

Understand and apply basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretation.

Learning Outcome 2.1: Scientific Reasoning

Use scientific reasoning to interpret psychological phenomena.

▼ Measure: Independent Research Project

Describe the type and source of evidence being used for this measure of the learning outcome (e.g., a randomly selected representative subset of senior capstone papers from COL 101):

Independent research projects from the Fall 2016 sections of PSY 225, PSY 325, and PSY 424 will be collected and assessed using a locally developed 4-point rubric (see attachments). Within each course, 40% of the projects collected will be randomly selected for this assessment.

Identify a target (or benchmark) level at which the Program would like to see students achieve this outcome (e.g., at least 80% of students will receive an average rating of...): For PSY 225 projects, we hope to see at least 50% of students achieve a rating of 2 (developing) or better. For PSY 325 projects, we hope to see at least 50% of students achieve a rating of 3 (competent) or better. For PSY 424 projects, we hope to see at least 80% of students achieve a rating of 3 (competent) or better.

Describe how this assessment will be/was carried out, including how the measure will be/was analyzed/assessed: At the end of the fall term, instructors for each class will provide copies of all their student's research projects to the Program Chair. The Chair will then randomly select 40% from each cohort to be used in the assessment. Program faculty will then meet in January to calibrate their use of the rubric. Once calibrated, two faculty will read each project and rate it according to the rubric criteria for this learning outcome. In cases where the two faculty differ in their ratings, a third rating by the Program Chair will be used to determine the final rating.

Supporting Attachments:

 Rubric - Independent Research Projects.docx (Word Document (Open XML))

Findings for Independent Research Project

Summary of Findings: For PSY 225 projects, 40% of students achieved a rating of 2 (developing) or better. For PSY 325 projects, 35% of students achieved a rating of 3 (competent) or better. For PSY 424 projects, 63% of students achieve a rating of 3 (competent) or better.

While all three of the cohorts assessed fell below the expected targets, the majority (82%) of those that did not achieve the target rating were still very close to meeting their respective targets.

Results: Target Achievement: Not Met

Provide a summary of how the findings/results from this measure are being used by the program to improve student learning of this particular learning outcome: In light of these findings, the program is taking a look at how the projects in PSY 225 and PSY 325 are currently sequenced. Originally, students were expected to complete an independent research project in one semester that used one or more of the major methodologies. Going forward, students in PSY 225 will only be expected to complete a research proposal, but not actually carry out the research being proposed. This will allow more time to be devoted to learning proper literature review strategies, research designs, and how to integrate previous research and theory into a coherent research question and set of hypotheses.

Likewise, students in PSY 325 will now be expected to begin with their proposal from PSY 225, allowing them to concentrate their efforts on the actual conduct of research, analysis of the data, and interpretation of the results. Sequencing these projects in this manner emphasizes quality over quantity in terms of learning the necessary research skills before entering the capstone course (PSY 424).

Describe how and when the Program will reassess the(se) action(s) to know whether or not the action(s) had the desired impact: This SLO is slated to be

(re)assessed in the third academic year (2018-19) of this current assessment cycle and will be assessed using the same plan described in this report.

Substantiating Evidence:

- 📎 Example Student Research Project - Competent.docx (Word Document (Open XML))
- 📎 Example Student Research Project - Needs Improvement.docx (Word Document (Open XML))

Learning Goal 3: Application of Psychology

Understand and apply psychological principles to personal, social, and organizational issues.

Learning Outcome 3.1: Apply Ethical Standards

Apply ethical standards to evaluate psychological science and practice.

▼ **Measure:** Common Exam Questions

Describe the type and source of evidence being used for this measure of the learning outcome (e.g., a randomly selected representative subset of senior capstone papers from COL 101):

Three common exam questions (short answers) will be incorporated into the final exams for PSY 207, PSY 211, and PSY 212. All responses will be gathered by the respective instructors of each course and from that pool, a randomly selected sample of 15 responses to each question will be assessed using a 3-point rubric (deficient, correct/average, and correct/advanced).

Identify a target (or benchmark) level at which the Program would like to see students achieve this outcome (e.g., at least 80% of students will receive an average rating of...): At least 80% of students will achieve ratings on each question of 1 ("correct/average") or better.

Describe how this assessment will be/was carried out, including how the measure will be/was analyzed/assessed: In early spring 2017, instructors from each course will compile all common questions from their final exams and provide them to the Program Chair who will randomly select 15 responses to each of the three questions to be assessed. Two faculty will rate each response according to the criteria in the rubric. In cases where the ratings differ, the Program Chair will offer a third rating to be used as a tie-breaker.

Supporting Attachments:

- 📎 Rubric - Ethics Applications.docx (Word Document (Open XML))

Findings for Common Exam Questions

Summary of Findings: Question 1: 82% of students received a rating of 1 or better.
Question 2: 74% of students received a rating of 1 or better.
Question 3: 86% of students received a rating of 1 or better.

Questions 1 and 3 pertained to the application of ethical standards to psychological research while question 2 pertained to the application of ethical standards to the practice of psychology. The results are not all that surprising given the emphasis placed on scientific research in the core curriculum (PSY 225, PSY 325, & PSY 424) and the relative lack of emphasis on the practice of psychology in an undergraduate curriculum.


Results: Target Achievement: Not Met


Provide a summary of how the findings/results from this measure are being used by the program to improve student learning of this particular learning outcome: The program plans to implement a short module on ethics in the practice of psychology that will be incorporated in PSY 100, PSY 211, PSY 323, and PSY 420. The module will include a short exercise using case studies where students will practice their application of ethical principles to the practice of psychology.

Describe how and when the Program will reassess the(se) action(s) to know whether or not the action(s) had the desired impact: This SLO is slated to be (re)assessed in the first academic year (2019-20) of the next assessment cycle. We

will make use of the same three questions administered in the same group of classes.

Substantiating Evidence:

 Compilation of Faculty Ratings of Common Questions.docx (Word Document (Open XML))

 Compilation of Student Answers to Common Questions.docx (Word Document (Open XML))

Last Modified: 18-Aug-16 11:12:24 AM EDT