UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN WHITEWATER

ACADEMIC ASSESSMENT

Psychology (BA/BS)

Mission Statement

In accord with the University and College of Letters and Sciences missions, the department of Psychology has the following mission:

- The department offers a broad range of courses in psychology with an emphasis on scientific inquiry and critical thinking. These courses prepare majors and minors for further graduate training or to seek employment.
- The department offers a graduate program in School Psychology, leading to the Educational Specialist degree.
- The department encourages scholarly activity by both faculty and students and supports faculty and student research.
- The department encourages faculty involvement in departmental, college, and university service, as well as student and faculty linkages with community agencies.

Student Learning Outcomes

Student learning outcomes (SLOs) are statements of what a student will know or be able to do when they have completed a program. They represent the knowledge and skills a program has determined are most important for students to gain from that program. The most useful SLOs are specific and measurable so the program can accurately assess the degree to which students have achieved each outcome, and they align with college and institution mission and values. Data on achievement of SLOs is used to make improvements in the program and increase student success.

In 2002 the Task Force on Undergraduate Psychology Major Competencies of the American Psychological Association (APA) published "Undergraduate Psychology Major Learning Goals and Outcomes: A Report" (updated in 2007, *APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Major*). The report describes 10 achievement goals for undergraduate Psychology students grouped into two categories to emphasize goals specific to the Psychology major and goals consistent with Liberal Arts Education that are further developed in Psychology. Our objectives are clearly consistent with the APA goals for the Psychology major (Knowledge Base of Psychology; Research Methods in Psychology, Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology, Application of Psychology, and Values in Psychology), as well as with those that articulate Psychology's contribution to and extension of more Liberal Arts goals (Information & Technological Literacy, Communication Skills, Sociocultural & International Awareness, Personal Development, and Career Planning & Development).

Subject Matter

Graduates from the department of Psychology will be able to demonstrate:

- Basic factual knowledge of psychology, including fundamental properties of the nervous and perceptual system, and the principles of learning, cognition and memory, human development, psychological disorders, personality, and social processes.
- Knowledge of historical and contemporary theoretical perspectives presented by physiological, cognitive, behavioral, social, psychodynamic, and humanistic approaches.
- Knowledge of different research techniques, including observation, case study, experimentation, and correlation.
- Knowledge of ethical issues related to the field of psychology.
- Knowledge of sociocultural contexts that influence individual differences, and which affect theory and research in psychology.

Cognitive Development

Graduates from the department of Psychology will be able to:

- Distinguish between correlation and causation.
- Detect a valid from an invalid conclusion based on given empirical evidence.
- Draw a valid conclusion based on application of statistical analysis of evidence.
- Recognize the need for control/baseline conditions to apprise an effect.
- Design a simple, sound plan to answer a research question.
- Apply knowledge of psychological principles to everyday life situations.
- Explain the meaning and importance of clinically significant findings.

Skills

Graduates from the department of Psychology will be able to:

- Demonstrate competence in basic computer skills, including the ability to use word processing and statistical analysis software.
- Search for printed and electronic information on a specifically defined and/or general area of psychology (e.g., library's on-line system, CD-ROM, and the Internet).
- Gather systematic information about human experience or behavior.
- Conduct and interpret simple data analyses.
- Write a research report according to APA format.
- Communicate research findings.