

Psychology Department Academic Learning Compact

Consistent with the Board of Governors Policy Guideline #PG 05.02.15, this document forms the Academic Learning Compact for the psychology department, specifying what students will be able to know and do upon graduating with a major in psychology. Within the compact is a description of learning outcomes, how they will be assessed, and the criterion for success. The learning outcomes encompass the following goals for students graduating from USFSP: content/discipline knowledge and skills, communication skills, scientific inquiry/critical thinking skills, and civic engagement.

Academic Learning Compact

The Academic Learning Compact for the psychology major is consistent with the American Psychological Association (APA) Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major (May, 2013). Revised APA guidelines specify 5 goals:

1. Knowledge Base in Research Methods
2. Scientific Inquiry and Critical Thinking
3. Ethical and Social Responsibility
4. Communication
5. Professional Development

Learning Outcomes

Learning outcomes can be written at different levels of generality. The APA goals above represent the greatest level of generality. Within each goal above are a set of specific learning outcomes that together stipulate the kinds of learning required to achieve the general goal. Additional layers of indicators can be presented at even greater specificity. Our Department has adopted the structure of outcomes used by the APA. Goals represent the highest layer of generality, followed by outcomes, and finally by indicators.

Goal 1. Knowledge Base in Psychology

This goal mirrors the USFSP institution goal of content/discipline knowledge and skills. The Introductory Psychology course that is prerequisite for subsequent courses meets this goal by building knowledge in content areas of biological, cognitive, developmental, and social bases of behavior and in research methodology. Deeper knowledge within Psychology's major sub-disciplines is gained in 4000 level content courses. Facility in use of SPSS and in methodological/analytic knowledge and skills are gained across a series of required quantitatively-oriented courses. Both the Introductory course and the Department's required Diversity course build student's knowledge of and appreciation for how sociocultural contexts influence individual differences and applicability of theory and research findings across societal and cultural groups. To summarize the following outcomes are assessed of all students in our Introductory Psychology course, our 4000 level content course, our quantitatively-oriented courses, and our diversity courses:

- ✓ Demonstrate knowledge in content areas of biological, cognitive, developmental, and social bases of behavior and research methodology.
- ✓ Demonstrate familiarity with SPSS and methodological/analytic knowledge and skills.
- ✓ Demonstrate knowledge of and appreciation for how sociocultural contexts influence individual differences and applicability of theory and research findings across societal and cultural groups.

Goal 2: Scientific Inquiry and Critical Thinking

This goal mirrors the USFSP institutional goal of scientific inquiry/critical thinking. The following outcomes are assessed of all students across our required quantitatively-oriented course sequence (Psychological Statistics, Research Methods, and either Experimental Design and Analysis or Psychological Tests and Measures):

- ✓ Demonstrate psychology information literacy.
- ✓ Interpret, design, and conduct basic psychological research.

Goal 3: Ethical and Social Responsibility

This goal is most pertinent to the USFSP goal of advancing committed but knowledgeable civic engagement. Students gain an appreciation for diverse people in the Department's required diversity course and also in undergraduate coursework in ethics. Ethical responsibility is also formally assessed of all students with respect to appropriate respect for and interaction with others within a research context. The following outcome is evaluated of all students:

- ✓ Application of ethical standards to psychological science and practice.

Goal 4. Communication

APA goal 4 overlaps with the USFSP institutional communication goal. Outcomes built into student coursework and formally assessed are:

- ✓ Demonstrate effective writing in multiple formats.
- ✓ Exhibit effective presentation s
- ✓ kills in multiple formats.

Goal 5. Professional Development

We do not formally assess students on APA goal 5 at the departmental level.

Below is a summary of the means of assessment/corroborating evidence for each of the APA goals/student learning objectives (SLO) cross referenced against the USFSP goal addressed by each goal/SLO. For each goal, the criterion for success is 70% higher on the vetted item pool or assignment.

APA Goals/Objectives	Means of Assessment/ Corroborating Evidence*	USFSP Goal
[1.1] Describe key concepts, principles, and overarching themes in psychology and understand and apply knowledge of psychology's content domains.	[1.1] Student understanding of the distinctive thrust of four different sub disciplinary areas (Biological, Cognition/Learning, Developmental and Social Psychology bases of behavior) is assessed in PSY 2012 Introduction to Psychology using an agreed upon pool of 10 items per sub-discipline (40 total), administered twice (once during mid-term exams, and again on a comprehensive final)	Content/Discipline Knowledge and Skills 1.a.1
[1.2] Demonstrate skill in the use of SPSS to analyze data.	[1.2] Assessment of this skill is described in 2.2b.	Scientific Inquiry/Critical Thinking 3.b.2
APA Goals/Objectives	Means of Assessment/ Corroborating Evidence*	USFSP Goal
[2.1] Demonstrate psychology information literacy.	[2.1a] Students taking PSY 3213 Research Methods will read and summarize general ideas and conclusions from psychological sources, including conceptual/operational definitions from an article. This skill will also continue to be assessed in select Upper Division courses.	Scientific Inquiry/Critical Thinking 3.a.1
	[2.1b] Students taking PSY 3213 Research Methods will describe kinds of additional information (beyond personal experience) acceptable in developing behavioral explanations (i.e., popular press reports vs. scientific findings) by conducting a literature search and writing to address a common psychological question using sources twice across the semester.	Scientific Inquiry/Critical Thinking 3.a.2
	[2.1c] Students taking PSY 3213 Research Methods will identify and navigate psychology databases and other legitimate sources of psychology information.	Scientific Inquiry/Critical Thinking 3.a.3
[2.2] Design, Conduct, and Interpret basic psychological research.	[2.2a] Students taking PSY 3204 Psychological Statistics and PSY 3213 Research Methods will recognize and understand appropriate use of major research designs and statistical methods of the field by completing a vetted item pool.	Scientific Inquiry/Critical Thinking 3.b.1
	[2.2b] Students taking PSY 3213 Research Methods and PSY 4205 Experimental Design & Analysis will conduct or replicate scientific studies to confirm a hypothesis based on operational definitions, and explain why conclusions in psychological projects must be both reliable and valid.	Scientific Inquiry/Critical Thinking 3.b.2a
	[2.2c] Students taking CLP 4433 Psychological Tests and Measurements will conduct a study to develop a survey with item analysis on collected data demonstrating high quality measurement strategies to enhance reliability and validity.	Scientific Inquiry/Critical Thinking 3.b.2b
	[2.2d] Students taking PSY 3204 Psychological Statistics , PSY 3213 Research Methods , PSY 4205 Experimental Design and Analysis , and CLP 4433 Psychological Tests and Measurements will conduct multiple data analyses using SPSS and interpret the findings.	Scientific Inquiry/Critical Thinking 3.b.2c
APA Goals/Objectives	Means of Assessment/ Corroborating Evidence*	USFSP Goal
[3.1] Apply ethical standards to	[3.1a] All students taking PSY 2012 Introduction to Psychology will provide a written response to a standardized scenario developed by the faculty to assess	Civic Engagement/Ethical & Social

<p>psychological science and practice.</p>	<p>recognition of cultural sensitivity.</p>	<p>Responsibility 4.a.1</p>
<p>[3.2] Students will recognize, understand, and respect the complexity of sociocultural and international diversity.</p>	<p>[3.1b]. Students taking PSY 3213 Research Methods will be required to complete a 2-hour online (or classroom) certification in research ethics using the CITI program (or equivalent offered by the USF system Institutional Review Board). This instruction is focused on the protection of human subjects. The online certification students complete is the national standard for ethics training.</p>	<p>Civic Engagement/ Ethical & Social Responsibility 4.b.1</p>
	<p>[3.2a] SOP 4744 Women’s Mental Health: Students taking Women’ Mental Health will complete a final group project, including written and oral communication requirements, assessing their comprehensive knowledge of the influence of gender diversity, race/ethnicity, sexual orientation, multicultural and/or cultural background, on individual differences and interactions among diverse people.</p>	<p>Civic Engagement/ Ethical & Social Responsibility 4.a.4</p>
	<p>[3.2b] SOP 4723 Cross-Cultural Psychology: Students complete an annotated bibliography on a topic related to one culture and present an oral summary of their research. The annotated bibliography must include summaries of articles from refereed journals and other reputable sources that (a) examine the sociocultural and international contexts that influence individual differences in the cultural group; (b)explain how individual differences influence beliefs, values, and interactions with others and vice versa in the cultural group; and (c) predict how interaction among diverse people can challenge conventional understanding of psychological processes and behavior.</p>	<p>Civic Engagement/ Ethical & Social Responsibility 4.a.2</p>
	<p>[3.2c] SOP 4450 Psychology of Religion: Students debate advantages vs disadvantages of religion to individual believers and to society and present research from refereed articles to (a) address the sociocultural context that influences individual differences in religious groups; (b) explain how individual differences influence beliefs, values, and interactions with others in religious groups; and (c) predict how interaction among diverse people can challenge conventional understanding of psychological processes and behavior.</p>	<p>Civic Engagement/ Ethical & Social Responsibility 4.a.3</p>
<p>APA Goals/Objectives</p>	<p>Means of Assessment/ Corroborating Evidence*</p>	<p>USFSP Goal</p>
<p>[4.1] Demonstrate effective writing in multiple formats.</p>	<p>[4.1a] Students taking PSY 3213 Research Methods will write an APA style paper based on a research project involving data analysis. Students taking CLP 4433 Psychological Tests and Measurements will write an APA style paper based on a Test Development project. Students taking PSY 4205 Experimental Design and Analysis will write essays on common issues regarding experimental design. Students in select “Upper Division courses” will write a research review paper in APA style.</p>	<p>Communication Skills 2.a.1</p>
<p>[4.2] Exhibit effective presentation skills in multiple formats.</p>	<p>[4.2a] Students taking PSY 3213 Research Methods and the department’s required diversity course (SOP 4744 Women’s Mental Health, SOP 4723 Cross Cultural Psychology, or SOP 4450 Psychology of Religion) will create a coherent and integrated oral argument based on a review of the pertinent literature, and deliver complex presentations within appropriate constraints that achieve effective delivery standards in professional oral performance. This skill will also continue to be assessed in select upper division courses.</p>	<p>Communication Skills 2.b.1</p>