

University of Memphis Undergraduate Psychology Program Goals

(Aligned with 2023 APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major)

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GOAL 1

Content Knowledge and Applications

Overview

- Students demonstrate comprehension of the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, historical trends, and empirical or evidence-based findings to discuss how psychological principles apply to behavior and mental processes.
- Students completing foundation courses demonstrate breadth of their knowledge and application of psychological ideas to simple problems; students completing a baccalaureate degree show depth in their knowledge and application of psychological concepts and frameworks to problems of greater complexity.
- Students are able to discuss psychological science's integrative themes and the respective sociocultural and historical backgrounds of those themes.

Outcomes	Baccalaureate Indicators
Students will:	Students will:
1.1 Describe key concepts, principles, and theories in psychological science	1.1A Use psychological concepts to explain and predict behavior with sensitivity to the limitations of that knowledge
	1.1B Interpret behavioral phenomena at an appropriate level of complexity, recognizing interactions among psychological, biological, social, and cultural variables
	1.1C Explain how research conclusions may be affected by sociocultural context
	1.1D Evaluate common myths and misconceptions about psychology
	1.1E Provide examples of psychology's influence on other disciplines (e.g., education, law)
1.2 Develop a working knowledge of psychology's major subfields	1.2A Compare and contrast psychology's major subfields
1.3 Portray significant aspects of the history of psychological science	1.3A Justify preferences for different theoretical orientations in psychological science based on perceived advantages and limitations
	1.3B Evaluate important aspects of psychology's history, including central concerns and theoretical conflicts
	1.3C Explain how historical context has affected which contributions made by psychologists were deemed influential
	1.3D Analyze historic examples of how

	psychologists have contributed to or challenged unethical outcomes or systemic discrimination
1.4 Apply psychological content to solve practical problems	1.4A Apply psychological principles to clarify pressing societal needs and inform public policy
	1.4B Appraise the effectiveness of psychological problem-solving strategies
	1.4C Evaluate how psychological factors interact to influence health
	1.4D Use psychological knowledge to identify ways to prevent or resolve interpersonal and intercultural conflicts
	1.4E Propose appropriate psychology-based solutions in applied settings
1.5 Provide examples of psychology's integrative themes*	1.5A Discuss the contributions that integrative themes make to the understanding and impact of psychological science *Psychological Science's Integrative Themes (APA, 2021a) <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Psychological science relies on empirical evidence and adapts as new data develop². 2. Psychological science explains general principles that govern behavior while recognizing individual differences. 3. Psychological, biological, social, and cultural factors influence behavior and mental processes. 4. Psychological science values diversity, promotes equity, and fosters inclusion in pursuit of a more just society. 5. Our perceptions and biases filter our experiences of the world through an imperfect personal lens. 6. Applying psychological principles can change our lives, organizations, and communities in positive ways. 7. Ethical principles guide psychological science research and practice.

Attributes Garnered from Achieving Indicators:

Knowledgeable about psychological science
 Psychologically literate
 Capable of coping with complexity and ambiguity
 Curious
 Flexible in thinking
 Motivated
 Open-minded
 Prepared

Recommendations for Use of Attributes:

- The attributes may be helpful when constructing appropriate descriptions for letters of recommendation that capture high-quality student performance.

- Describing the nature of the work accomplished that justifies the use of the attribute will produce stronger reference statements.
- These descriptions may be helpful in interviews where students are asked to describe their strengths and weaknesses.
- To provide support for self-assessment claims, students may offer specific examples of the work accomplished to maximize their effectiveness.

GOAL 2

Scientific Inquiry and Critical Thinking

Overview

Psychology is a STEM discipline that uses the same research practices found in other scientific fields (Dovidio et al., 2010). The skills in this domain involve the development of scientific reasoning and investigation, including developing proficiencies in research methods and statistics. Although these outcomes are introduced in foundation coursework, students typically develop these proficiencies mainly in required courses that focus on research methods and statistics. Students completing foundation courses learn basic skills and concepts in interpreting behavior using research, studying research, and applying research design principles to draw appropriate conclusions about behavior; students completing a baccalaureate design, evaluate, and execute research plans. Research skills reflect knowledge of and respect for diversity-related issues when targeting samples in study design. Research practice also includes an evaluation of the extent to which research findings can be generalized as applicable to groups beyond the research sample.

<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Baccalaureate Indicators</i>
Students will:	Students will:
2.1 Exercise scientific reasoning to investigate psychological phenomena	2.1A Distinguish psychological research concepts in a research study
	2.1B Develop plausible behavioral explanations that use scientific reasoning
	2.1C Implement strategies to minimize the influence of common fallacies in thinking that impair accurate research conclusions and predictions
2.2 Interpret, design, and evaluate psychological research	2.2A Select and apply the appropriate research design for a given research question
	2.2B Design or replicate a research study to confirm or disconfirm a testable hypothesis
	2.2C Evaluate the extent to which research strategies rule out alternative explanations and support cause-effect claims
	2.2D Use replicable and open scientific practices
2.3 Incorporate sociocultural factors in scientific research practices	2.3A Identify examples of how a researcher's value system, sociocultural characteristics, and historical context influence the development of scientific inquiry into psychological questions
	2.3B Incorporate appropriate sociocultural considerations in research design and interpretation

	2.3C Evaluate the generalizability of specific findings, including caution in extending western constructs in appropriate consideration of sociocultural factors
	2.3D Incorporate international sources, including nonwestern researchers and samples, in research processes, where appropriate
	2.3E Evaluate how qualitative research strategies address equity, diversity, and inclusion considerations
2.4 Use statistics to evaluate quantitative research findings	2.4A Propose appropriate scales of measurement that can be used for different research purposes
	2.4B Apply the appropriate use of descriptive and inferential statistics to a specific research design
	2.4C Communicate research findings using data visualizations
	2.4D Distinguish and interpret practical and ethical aspects of statistical analysis
	2.4E Identify, evaluate, or design high-quality measurement strategies that enhance reliability and validity

Attributes Garnered from Achieving Indicators:

Amiably skeptical	Collaborative
Creative	Intentional
Logical	Persistent
Self-directed	Systematic
Analytical	Constructively critical
Careful	Inventive
Curious	Precise
Open-minded	Comfortable with ambiguity
Self-starting	

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GOAL 3

Values in Psychological Science

Overview

This goal promotes the development of ethical and socially responsible values and behaviors in personal, professional, organizational, and institutional settings. The goal includes ethical reasoning and practices, interpersonal and intercultural responsiveness, and strategies that promote and sustain strong communities and equitable opportunities. Novice students in psychology become familiar with the formal regulations that govern ethical obligations in psychology and begin to embrace the values that will help them contribute to socially responsible outcomes in academic and work settings and in society. Advanced psychology students have more direct opportunities to embrace and adhere to ethical practices that will help them optimize their personal and professional achievements and contributions. Novice students recognize how diversity deriving from individual and intersectional differences can enrich human experience. Advanced students are adept at applying knowledge of individual and intersectional differences to improve outcomes. The final outcome addresses the ways in which psychological science can promote a more functional and fair society. Novice students explore the possibilities of using psychological knowledge to build better communities. Advanced students develop the skills to take appropriate action to improve community functions.

Outcomes	Baccalaureate Indicators
Students will:	Students will:
3.1 Employ ethical standards in research with human and non-human participants, practice, and academic contexts	3.1A Justify the use of ethical principles in research, practice, and academic contexts as well as everyday life
	3.1B Evaluate psychological research for adherence to relevant ethics codes for research involving human or nonhuman participants
	3.1C Prepare a research proposal to submit to a designated ethical review process
	3.1D Apply ethical principles to dilemmas that psychologists encounter in practice situations
	3.1E Explain how upholding academic integrity strengthens relationships and communities
3.2 Develop and practice interpersonal and intercultural responsiveness	3.2A Articulate the value of and seek opportunities to interact respectfully with people of diverse abilities, backgrounds, nationalities, and cultural perspectives

	3.2B Promote high standards of socially responsible personal values in interpersonal and work-related relationships
	3.2C Evaluate how interpersonal opportunities and challenges develop from differences related to diversity
	3.2D Seek equitable decisions and actions in allocating resources and opportunities
	3.2E Identify and implement ways to reduce racism and other discriminatory beliefs and practices
3.3 Apply psychological principles to strengthen community and improve quality of life	3.3A Propose ways to improve quality of life using psychological principles that are respectful of cultural context
	3.3B Participate in activities that promote civic, social, and/or global outcomes that benefit communities
	3.2B Promote high standards of socially responsible personal values in interpersonal and work-related relationships
	3.2C Evaluate how interpersonal opportunities and challenges develop from differences related to diversity
	3.2D Seek equitable decisions and actions in allocating resources and opportunities

Attributes Garnered from Achieving Indicators:

Trustworthy
Generous
Moral
Accountable
Flexible
Respectful
Sensitive
Honest
Fair-minded

Reliable
Courageous
Empathetic
Ethical
Community engaged
Beneficent
Rigorous
Inclusive
Service-oriented

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GOAL 4

Communication, Psychological Literacy, and Technology Skills

Overview

The skills in this category address the ability of students to build and maintain effective communication skills in processing and expressing information. Novice students develop the capacity to distinguish appropriate and inappropriate communication strategies in developing interpersonal relationships. Advanced students use their knowledge of equity, diversity, and inclusion to improve the effectiveness of their communication skills. Novice students grow in their ability to express their own ideas with clarity, explain the ideas of others, discuss psychological concepts, communicate a cogent scientific argument, and present information using a scientific approach. Toward the end of their major, students are able to communicate the results of a research study or other psychology-related project, explain scientific results, and present information to professional audiences in different formats. Students develop psychological literacy, including applying knowledge of research skills necessary to be an informed consumer of research or a critic regarding unsupported claims about behavior. Ultimately, the psychology student possesses the tools and motivation to evaluate whether claims have merit. They also develop some sophistication in using appropriate technology to improve communication outcomes.

Outcomes	Baccalaureate Indicators
Students will:	Students will:
4.1 Interact effectively with others	4.1A Distinguish between overt and covert messages in communication
	4.1B Deploy psychological concepts to facilitate effective interactions with people of diverse backgrounds
4.2 Write and present effectively for different purposes	4.2A Craft clear and concise communications to fulfill a purpose and address specific audiences
	4.2B Construct arguments clearly and concisely from evidence-based psychological concepts and theories
	4.2C Develop ideas in formats to fit a complex project's purpose and length
	4.2D Deliver complex communication projects that meet established conventions and professional guidelines
	4.2E Use inclusive language and examples in communication projects to optimize audience understanding and engagement
	4.2F Revise communication projects by incorporating constructive feedback
	4.2G Generate questions intended to deepen or broaden the discussion related to a communication project
	4.2H Offer constructive feedback on a communication project

4.3 Provide evidence of psychological literacy	4.3A Accurately summarize complex ideas and conclusions from psychological sources and research
	4.3B Describe the characteristics and relative value of different kinds of information sources (e.g., primary vs. secondary, peer reviewed vs. non-reviewed, empirical vs. nonempirical)
	4.3C Evaluate psychological information based on the currency, reliability, validity, and generalizability of sources
	4.3D Evaluate the biases and errors that appear in various media
4.4 Exhibit appropriate technological skills to improve communication	4.4A Use electronic communication professionally
	4.4B Use digital and social media effectively and responsibly
	4.4C Develop comprehensive and efficient strategies for locating and using relevant scholarship to investigate psychological questions
	4.4D Use advanced features of technology to create engaging, effective, and professional documents and presentations

Attributes Garnered from Achieving Indicators:

Attentive	Investigative
Precise	Respectful
Prepared	Organized
Technology-oriented	Persuasive
Comprehensible	Adaptable
Flexible	

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GOAL 5

Personal and Professional Development

Overview

The skills in this domain refer to abilities that sharpen students' readiness for the workplace whether the student's future involves graduate school or a job following the associate or baccalaureate degree. A background in psychological science may confer a workplace advantage because of the specific applicability of content that focuses on understanding human diversity and behavior. The skills related to this goal have been influenced by The Skillful Psychology Student, a document developed by APA's Committee on Associate and Baccalaureate Education that articulates what skills students will need to be successful. The emphasis in this domain involves self-regulation, project management skills, professional judgment, collaboration skills, and proficiency in workplace technology and career planning. Curriculum design within psychology programs needs to address how to provide explicit feedback to promote development of these skill sets over the duration of study in psychological science. These skills can be developed and refined in traditional academic settings and through experiences acquired during internships, full- or part-time jobs, leadership positions, and extracurricular engagement (cf. National Association of Colleges and Employers' Job Outlook, 2022). Educators commit to facilitating inclusive opportunities for psychology students from different backgrounds. Campus career professionals can be enlisted to support planning and execution of goals related to selection and pursuit of a professional direction.

Outcomes Students will:	Baccalaureate Indicators Students will:
5.1 Exhibit effective self-regulation	5.1A Use self-regulation strategies (e.g., focused attention, time management, meeting deadlines) to enhance performance and develop evidence for a strong work ethic
	5.1B Incorporate suggestions from feedback from peers, educators, and mentors to improve task performance
	5.1C Incorporate self-awareness and self-care practices to promote high-quality performance
	5.1D Persevere when appropriately challenged by using resilience-based strategies
	5.1E Adapt to change in a flexible and proactive manner that is appropriate to the context
5.2 Refine project management skills	5.2A Adhere to or exceed project criteria in project completion
	5.2B Develop alternative strategies to expand resources and overcome problems and constraints
5.3 Display effective judgment in professional interactions	5.3A Accept and adapt to interaction complexity in professional, cultural, and academic contexts
	5.3B Develop and implement professional solutions that emphasize the value of data as evidence
	5.3C Engage in civic projects that can produce a positive professional impact

	5.3D Discuss how well one's own personal values align with particular workplaces
5.4 Cultivate workforce collaboration skills	5.4A Collaborate effectively on team-based projects
	5.4B Incorporate diverse perspectives to maximize collaboration effectiveness and problem-solving
	5.4C Implement possible solutions to problems that develop when working with teams
	5.4D Address weaknesses in one's own performance as a team member
	5.4E Exhibit leadership in successful task completion
	5.4F Adopt specific strategies to mitigate personal biases that can influence professional judgment
5.5 Demonstrate appropriate workforce technological skills	5.5A Use appropriate technology to improve work quality, efficiency, and productivity
	5.5B Develop competence in adapting to changing technologies
	5.5C Establish a strategic online presence
5.6 Develop direction for life after graduation	5.6A Refine an academic and career plan based on accurate self-assessment of abilities and feedback from others
	5.6B Use appropriate career resources to evaluate academic and career options
	5.6C Develop evidence of skills and qualifications that graduate programs and employers desire in psychology graduates
	5.6D Create and maintain a resume or curriculum vitae that showcases a psychology background
	5.6E Gain experience and develop skills in activities that strengthen preparation for job entry or graduate school admission

Attributes Garnered from Achieving Indicators:

Adaptable	Confident
Dependable	Efficient
Intuitive	Reflective
Resourceful	Sensitive
Collaborative	Conscientious
Directed	Industrious
Prepared	Resilient
Responsible	Skillful

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