

Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program: Experimental Psychology

Department: Psychology

Degree or Certificate Level: Ph.D.

College/School: College of Arts & Sciences

Date (Month/Year): December/2020

Primary Assessment Contact: Brenda Kirchhoff

In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? 2019-2020

In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? 2015-2016

1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

We assessed elements of two learning outcomes this year: Outcome 1 - students will become competent in the conceptualization, design, conducting, analysis, and reporting of psychological research and Outcome 3 - students will display an understanding of diversity and ethics issues as they apply to psychological research, teaching, and professional development as an Experimental Psychologist. Each of these outcomes was assessed using multiple specific concrete indicators designed to assess whether specific elements of each multifaceted outcome were mastered.

2. Assessment Methods: Artifacts of Student Learning

Which artifacts of student learning were used to determine if students achieved the outcome(s)? Please identify the course(s) in which these artifacts were collected. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

As described further in number 4 below, data included ratings on the "Olson Ballots" (comprised of twenty 5-point rating scales) completed independently by 3 faculty members comprising the student's thesis or dissertation committee at the time of the thesis/dissertation defense (outcome 1), ratings of research quality/progress (outcome 1) provided by faculty mentors (based on feedback from all program faculty) following an annual student evaluation meeting, performance on the test following CITI (Collaborative Institutional Training Initiating) training on the ethical use of human subjects (outcome 3), and grades in required research methods and statistics courses (PSY 5080, PSY 5790, and PSY 6500, outcome 1), a required laboratory research course (PSY 5840, outcome 1), and ethics and diversity courses (PSY 6030 and PSY 6800, outcome 3).

Courses in the spring 2020 semester started in person but then transitioned to an online format due to COVID-19. Madrid student artifacts were not included, as the Madrid campus does not offer a graduate program in Experimental Psychology.

3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the artifacts of student learning, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and include them in/with this report.

The program director compiled and analyzed the data, based on ratings provided by faculty (on Olson Ballots and annual review forms) and a review of student transcripts. Copies of the Olson Ballots and annual student evaluation forms, which comprise major parts of the data collection process, are attached.

4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcome(s)? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

The first learning outcome in our program's assessment plan is that **students will become competent in the conceptualization, design, conducting, analysis, and reporting of psychological research**. This outcome was assessed during the 2019-2020 academic year by addressing the following four questions:

1. For students who defended their Master's thesis or dissertation from March of 2019 through February of 2020, what were the average ratings given by the 3 faculty committee members on the "Olson Ballots", which consist of 20 five-point rating scales (see attached) assessing multiple aspects of each of the major sections of the thesis/dissertation (total scores can range from 20 to 100)?

Four students defended their thesis with a mean rating of 81 and four students defended their dissertation with a mean rating of 88.

2. For first-year graduate students, how did they perform in the required research methods and statistics courses?

Average grades (where A = 4.0) were 4.00 for PSY 5790 (Univariate Statistics) and 4.00 for PSY 6500 (Multivariate Statistics) among Experimental Psychology students taking these courses during the current academic year.

3. How did students perform in their required research laboratory course (PSY 5840)?

The average grade (where A = 4.0) in PSY 5840 was 3.98 for the 25 students in the program during the current academic year.

4. For all students, how were they evaluated on "research quality" and "research progress" by the Experimental Psychology faculty as a whole during the end-of-year student evaluation meetings (3-point scales: inadequate, adequate, exceptional)?

All 25 students were rated as adequate or above in both "research quality" and "research progress" during the Spring 2020 student evaluation meeting.

The third learning outcome in our program's assessment plan is **that students will display an understanding of diversity and ethics issues as they apply to psychological research, teaching, and professional development as an Experimental Psychologist**. For this academic year, this outcome was assessed in the following two ways:

1. Successful completion of the CITI (Collaborative Institutional Training Initiating) training on the ethical use of human subjects (for new graduate students).

100% of first-year graduate students have successfully completed this training (as reflected in a "passing" score received from the exam administrators).

2. Grades in the following two required courses: PSY 6030 (Human Diversity) and PSY 6800 (Ethics and Professional Issues).

Eight students completed PSY 6030 and nine completed PSY 6800 during the 2019-2020 academic year, all receiving grades of A (GPA = 4.0).

5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you?

The students in our program are adequately meeting our program's first and third learning outcomes.

6. Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings

A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

This completed assessment report was emailed to all program faculty. It will be discussed during a program meeting in the spring semester of 2021.

B. How specifically have you decided to use these findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you've initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies

- Course content
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites

- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the Assessment Plan

- Student learning outcomes
- Artifacts of student learning
- Evaluation process

- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of these findings.

We have decided to incorporate more diversity-focused content into our courses in response to recent national events and student request.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

7. Closing the Loop: Review of Previous Assessment Findings and Changes

A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?

We do not have many years of assessment data at this point, so we have not implemented any major changes to our program in response to it yet.

B. How has this change/have these changes been assessed?

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools and/or revised/updated assessment plans along with this report.

Olson Awards Ratings Ballot

Instructions: Please complete both sides of this form. When you are finished, enclose your ballot in a sealed envelope and return to the chairperson of the student's thesis or dissertation committee.

Date of Oral Defense _____

Circle one: Thesis Dissertation

Student's Name: _____

Title: _____

	Poor	Superior
I. Introduction		
1. Originality of the Problem	1 2 3 4 5	
2. Importance and significance of the Problem	1 2 3 4 5	
II. Literature Review		
1. History of the Problem	1 2 3 4 5	
2. Theoretical formulations relation to the Problem	1 2 3 4 5	
3. Critical review of the literature	1 2 3 4 5	
4. Clarity of conceptual hypotheses and problem statement	1 2 3 4 5	
III. Method		
1. Clarity of research design	1 2 3 4 5	
2. Originality including justification for departures from or agreement with traditional research design	1 2 3 4 5	
3. Appropriateness of methods used (operationalization of variables, sample, research setting, timeline, attention to ethical research practices etc.)	1 2 3 4 5	
IV. Results		
1. Appropriateness of statistics employed	1 2 3 4 5	
2. Adequacy of statistical analyses	1 2 3 4 5	
3. Clarity of results presentation	1 2 3 4 5	

V. Discussion	
1. Interpretation of statistical results	1 2 3 4 5
2. Description of how results fit with other research findings	1 2 3 4 5
3. Consideration of study limitations, alternative explanations and identification of improvements in design	1 2 3 4 5
4. Extent to which the research makes a contribution to the empirical literature	1 2 3 4 5
VI. Formal	
1. Overall clarity of ideas expressed	1 2 3 4 5
2. Synthesis, organization, and integration of material	1 2 3 4 5
3. Sources adequate, current and/or primary	1 2 3 4 5
4. Overall exposition (conformity to APA style, sufficient conciseness of expression, spelling, grammar, punctuation, etc.)	1 2 3 4 5
TOTAL (100 points)	

Experimental Psychology Program
Graduate Student Evaluation Form

Student Name: _____

Date of Evaluation: _____

Based upon the faculty's discussion you were rated in each of the following dimensions.
(Inadequate: Not meeting expectations, not progressing; Adequate: Meeting expectations, making sufficient progress; Exceptional: Exceeding expectations, exceptional progress).

	Inadequate	Adequate	Exceptional
Academic Quality			
Academic Progress			
Research Quality			
Research Progress			
Professional Skill Acquisition			
Personal and Professional Development			
Fulfillment of Assistantship Duties (if applicable)			

Comments:

Signatures:

Student: _____
Date: _____

Advisor: _____
Date: _____