

Psychology BS

Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose

Institutional Mission Reference

The Bachelor's Program in Psychology offers students a thorough background in human behavior and a needed perspective to virtually every other academic discipline in the University. The program contributes to the University's General Education Program. It helps develop critical thinking skills and problem solving, and is the key in students' understanding of personal growth, achievement, and citizenship behaviors. The faculty are committed to quality teaching and the discovery of new knowledge. The faculty also support the University's mission to serve a diverse student body both on and off campus.

Institutional Goal(s) Supported

The program supports several of the University's goals stated on pages 8-9 of the 2000-2005 ODU Strategic Plan. Specifically, it aims to: (a) emphasize intellectual skills and intercultural understanding in the study of human behavior; (b) provide the highest quality instruction to its students; (c) provide research and practical opportunities for connecting knowledge with application and community service; and (d) provide quality distance learning courses.

Intended Educational (Student) Outcomes, Methods for Assessment, Criteria for Success, Assessment Results, and Use of Results

Intended Outcome 1

Students will successfully demonstrate broad knowledge of psychological science and theory.

Method for Assessing Outcome 1 and Criterion for Success: Seniors in Psychology complete the Psychology Area Concentration Achievement Test (PACAT) produced by Austin-Peay University. We expect that our Fall 2000 and Spring 2001 cohorts of graduating seniors will score at the 50th percentile or better.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 1: The average Psychology senior who took the PACAT test during the 2000-2001 academic year scored at the 67th percentile across the four required subtests. One hundred and nineteen students took the PACAT during the 2000-2001 academic year.

Intended Outcome 2

Students will communicate effectively in writing.

Method for Assessing Outcome 2 and Criterion for Success: As a measure of success, we expect 70% of our seniors will pass the University Exit Writing Exam.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 2: Based on data from the "Exit Examination of Writing Efficiency" for June 2000 through May 2001, a total of 152 Psychology exams were completed. Of these, 73.7% passed.

Intended Outcome 3

Students will use research methods and designs to effectively test hypotheses and draw conclusions.

Method for Assessing Outcome 3 and Criterion for Success: In addition to University exit exams, seniors in Psychology complete the Psychology Area Concentration Achievement Test (PACAT). The PACAT was developed by Austin-Peay University. Two subscales are relevant to research understanding: Statistics and Experimental Methods. These tests are designed to test cohorts more than individuals, placing cohorts into percentiles. We expect that our Fall 2000 and Spring 2001 cohorts of graduating seniors will score at the 50th percentile or better on each test.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 3: The average Psychology senior who took the PACAT test during the 2000-2001 academic year scored at the 60th percentile on the Statistics subtest and the 56th percentile on the Experimental Methods subtest. One hundred and nineteen students took the PACAT during the 2000-2001 academic year.

Alternate Method for Assessing Outcome 3 and Criterion for Success: Students have the opportunity to participate in the research process with a faculty mentor for course credit. The overall average enrollment for these courses, Supervised Research (PSYC 497-498) and Honors Research (PSYC 487-488), has averaged 27 students per academic year between 1997 and 2000. We plan to encourage more students to participate, and expect to see a 15% increase above these courses' average enrollment during the 2000-2001 academic year.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected, Alternate Method for Outcome 3: The 2000-2001 enrollment in Supervised Research and Honors was 24 students. While this was not the expected increase, it was comparable to the enrollment for two of the previous three years. The third year (1999-2000) had an unusually high enrollment (about 12-15 students more than normal).

Intended Outcome 4

Students will understand how psychological science applies to the community.

Method for Assessing Outcome 4 and Criterion for Success: Several of our courses have an applied focus. Students learn the relevance of psychological science through these courses. One course in particular gives students opportunities to work in applied settings: Practicum (PSYC 369-370). Practicum opportunities range from participation in clinical settings to involvement in business environments. The average enrollment for Practicum was 29 between 1997-2000. We plan to encourage more students to participate, and expect to see a 15% increase above average in this course's enrollment during the 2000-2001 academic year.

Summary of Assessment Data Collected for Outcome 4: Twenty-four students were enrolled in the Practicum course during the 2000-2001 academic year. Although the enrollment in this course did not increase, it was comparable to the enrollment in two of the three previous years. As with the Research enrollment outcome, the previous year for Practicum (1999-2000) had higher enrollment than other years (36 students).