Student Learning Overview and Goals

Overview

The discipline of psychology is dedicated to increasing the scientific understanding of mind and the behavior of individuals, groups, and social systems and to the application of that understanding to enhance the functioning of individuals, groups, and society.

The Department of Psychology provides a quality, university-level education in the broad discipline of psychology for undergraduate students who have multiple personal and career objectives and contributes to the University’s program of general education for undergraduate students by providing introductory courses in psychology. The department’s research activities are the foundation for up-to-date and effective classroom and laboratory undergraduate education.

Program Goals and National Standards

The Psychology Department has two degree programs: a B.A. and a B.S. (Although the content of these programs overlaps considerably, the primary distinction between these two programs is that the B.S. requires additional courses in research methods, basic science, and math.) These programs are designed to address the standards established by the American Psychological Association (APA) for the Undergraduate Psychology Major as detailed by the 2013 report of the APA Board of Educational Affairs. These guidelines capture a set of optimal expectations for performance at the completion of the undergraduate degree by students who major in psychology. The document outlines 5 goals and suggested learning outcomes that represent reasonable departmental expectations for the undergraduate psychology major across educational contexts.

Goal 1: Knowledge Base in Psychology

Students should demonstrate fundamental knowledge and comprehension of the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, historical trends, and empirical findings to discuss how psychological principles apply to behavioral problems.

Goal 2: Scientific Inquiry and Critical Thinking

The skills in this domain involve the development of scientific reasoning and problem solving, including effective research methods.

Goal 3: Ethical and Social Responsibility in a Diverse World

The skills in this domain involve the development of ethically and socially responsible behaviors for professional and personal settings in a landscape that involves increasing diversity.

Goal 4: Communication

Students should demonstrate competence in writing and in oral and interpersonal communication skills.
**Goal 5: Professional Development**

The emphasis in this goal is on application of psychology-specific content and skills, effective self-reflection, project-management skills, teamwork skills, and career preparation.

**Summary Grid for Goals and Corresponding Courses**

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<td>Goal 2: Scientific Inquiry and Critical Thinking</td>
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<td>Goal 3: Ethical and Social Responsibility in a Diverse World</td>
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<td>Goal 4: Communication</td>
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<td>Strengthen</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 5: Professional Development*</td>
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<td>Strengthen</td>
<td>Strengthen</td>
<td>Strengthen</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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*This goal is also addressed through workshops, recurrent e-mails to Psychology majors, advisement, and material available on the department’s website.