

Academic Program  
Plan for Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes  
The University of New Mexico

---

**A. College, Department and Date**

1. College: Arts & Sciences
2. Department: Psychology
3. Date: September, 2008

**B. Academic Program of Study\***

Ph.D. Psychology

**C. Contact Person(s) for the Assessment Plan**

Tim Goldsmith, Psychology, gold@unm.edu  
Gordon Hodge, Psychology, ghodge@unm.edu  
Harold Delaney, Psychology, hdelaney@unm.edu

**D. Broad Program Goals & Measurable Student Learning Outcomes**

**1. Broad Program Learning Goals for this Degree/Certificate Program**

- A. Develop knowledge and skills of a professional research psychologist.
- B. Develop knowledge and skills for teaching at a college or university.
- C. Develop knowledge and skills required to engage in practice or research in a specific area within psychology.

**2. List of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs) for this Degree/Certificate Program**

- A. Professional research psychologist
    - A.1. Review scientific literature relevant to a research question
    - A.2. Formulate research hypotheses, design empirical studies to test hypotheses, and carry out data collection.
    - A.3. Perform appropriate statistical analyses of empirical data including interpretation of results
    - A.4. Know and practice ethical principles of scientific research
    - A.5. Make formal presentation of research findings to professional audience.
    - A.6. Write research article for peer-reviewed journal
-

- B. College/University teacher
  - B.1. Prepare and present material for course lecture and discussion.
  - B.2. Demonstrate skill at classroom management.
  - B.3. Develop tests for assessing students' knowledge and skills.
  - B.4. Understand cultural issues relevant to teaching.
- C. Scholarship in specialty area.
  - C.1. Describe and explain major theoretical positions and empirical findings in subfield of psychology
  - C.2. Perform original research in subfield of psychology.
  - C.3. Demonstrate competency in applying professional knowledge of specialty area to practice (e.g., interviewing, assessing, diagnosing, treating, acquiring & analyzing data)
  - C.4. Know and apply ethical principles relevant for practice in specialty area.

**E. Assessment of Student Learning Three-Year Plan**

All programs are expected to measure some outcomes annually and to measure all priority program outcomes at least once over two consecutive three-year review cycles. Describe below the plan for the next three years of assessment of program-level student learning outcomes.

**1. Student Learning Outcomes**

Relationship to UNM Student Learning Goals:

The learning outcomes for the psychology PhD degree align well with the three major student learning goals of UNM: knowledge, skills, and responsibility. Students acquire knowledge of the scientific method as it applies to the study of individual human behavior including the body of empirical and theoretical knowledge in their specialty area. They acquire skills in written and oral communication and designing and analyzing scientific studies. Psychology PhD students also exhibit responsibility by becoming competent in diverse and multicultural settings and knowing how to reason ethically in professional settings.

<b>University of New Mexico Student Learning Goals</b>				
<b>Program SLOs</b>	<b>Knowledge</b>	<b>Skills</b>	<b>Responsibility</b>	<b>Program SLO is conceptually different from university goals.</b>
A.2. Formulate research hypotheses, design empirical studies to test hypotheses, and carry out data collection.	X	X	X	

B.1. Prepare and present material for course lecture and discussion.	X	X	X	
C.1. Describe and explain major theoretical positions and empirical findings in subfield of psychology.	X	X	X	

**2. How will learning outcomes be assessed?**

A. What:

i. Means of Assessment.

A.2. Each PhD student completes an end-of-the-year evaluation that requests a list of all research activities, including the design of empirical studies and data collection.

B.1. Each PhD student who teaches a course for the department is formally evaluated by a psychology faculty member. A written evaluation of the student's performance is made during the student's lecture. In addition, each student who teaches a course is required to administer student evaluations (e.g., ICES) at the end of the course.

C.1. Each PhD student is required to complete a written and oral comprehensive examination. Students' understanding of theoretical positions and major empirical findings is formally assessed through this evaluation.

ii. Direct or indirect measurement.

All three of the above assessments are direct measures of learning outcomes.

iii. Criteria for Success.

A.2. Our initial performance target for this learning outcome is 50% of all graduate students will be involved in at least one research project where empirical data are being collected. Although we currently collect these evaluation data on our graduate students we have not been analyzing them and so we do not know our current baseline level of performance. Our plan is to increase this performance criterion over successive years.

B.1. Teachers are assessed on a 1 to 6 rating scale for six different teaching characteristics (e.g., knowledge of material, communication, organization & clarity). Our initial performance target for this learning outcome is 50% of all graduate students will achieve a mean rating of 4 or higher. With respect to student evaluations (e.g., ICES), our target is 50% of our graduate students will achieve a teacher rating of 4.5 or higher.

C.1. The written component of the comprehensive exam is graded independently by three psychology faculty. Each faculty scores the paper out of 100 points. Our

initial performance target for this learning outcome is for 50% of all graduate students will achieve a score of 80 or better.

B. Who: State explicitly whether the program's assessment will include evidence from all students in the program or a sample. Address the validity of any proposed sample of students.

A.2. All graduate students in residence will be evaluated on this learning outcome.

B.1. All graduate students who teach their own course (approximately 12 per year) will be evaluated on this learning outcome.

C.1. All graduate students who complete their comprehensive exam during the past academic year will be evaluated on this learning outcome.

**3. When will learning outcomes be assessed? When and in what forum will the results of the assessment be discussed?**

The end-of-the-year student evaluations (A.2.) will be collected in April of each year and the relevant data will be entered into a database. The student teaching evaluations (B.1.) and comprehensive exams (C.1.) will be collected throughout the year, and the information will be added to the database. Our plan is to compile all of the assessment results from the previous year during May. An outcomes assessment report will be written summarizing graduate student performance during the previous academic year and circulated to the faculty during the summer. A discussion of these results will occur in a faculty meeting at the beginning of the next year.

Fall, 2008

B.1 and C.1. evaluations will be collected.

Spring, 2009

A.2., B.1 and C.1. evaluations will be collected. Results will be analyzed and a summary report on graduate student learning outcomes written.

Fall, 2009

During a formal faculty meeting at the beginning of the fall semester, faculty will discuss the findings from the previous academic year and make recommendations to improve student learning in the PhD program.

This cycle of student assessment and revision to the graduate program will repeat over the three year period from 2008 to 2011. Performance criteria will be increased in successive years.

**4. What is the unit's process to analyze/interpret assessment data and use results to improve student learning?**

1. *who will participate in the assessment process (the gathering of evidence, the analysis/interpretation, recommendations).*

A.2. Student evaluations are collected by each area head at the end of the semester. The associate chair of graduate education will compile the results across the various areas.

B.1. Each graduate student teaching a course is assigned a faculty mentor/evaluator. It is this faculty member who will evaluate the student. The graduate student teaching the course will be responsible for administering end of the semester evaluations (e.g., ICES).

C.1. The committee constituted by the graduate school for examining the student's performance on the comprehensive exam will be responsible for evaluating the written component of the comprehensive exam. Each committee member reads and scores the exam separately, and then a final average score is recorded.

2. *the process for consideration of the implications of assessment for change:*

The psychology faculty as a whole will meet to discuss the assessment outcomes of the previous year and make recommendations for changes to the graduate program. Formal changes would require approval through faculty vote.

3. *How, when, and to whom will recommendations be communicated?*

Any changes to the program would be communicated to graduate students through memo.