

Department of Psychology, Assessment Plan
Cycle One: 2009-2013

The Department of Psychology has identified two top assessment priorities for this assessment cycle. We will assess Student Learning Outcome #5 – Understanding Ethical Issues and Student Learning Outcome #1.3 – Scientific Writing.

Priority One: Assess Learning Outcome 5 – Understanding of Ethical Issues.

Learning Outcome 5 states that students should:

1. Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant ethical issues, including a general understanding of the APA Code of Ethics
2. Recognize the necessity for ethical behavior in all aspects of the science and practice of psychology
3. Recognize that ethically complex situations can develop in the application of psychological principles

In each course we offer, we have specified the level of proficiency students should demonstrate with regard to understanding of ethical issues. The following rubric was instituted to evaluate proficiency in this context (adapted from APA, 2008):

1 = Basic: Students will describe relevant ethical issues as addressed by the APA code of ethics via written assignments or other course-related activities. See Appendix A for relevant assignments and course-related activities.

2 = Developing: Students will apply relevant ethical principles, as addressed by the APA code of ethics, to contrived or real-world ethical scenarios via written assignments or other course-related activities. See Appendix B for relevant assignments and course-related activities.

3 = Advanced: Students will critically evaluate policies and procedures related to behavior and mental processes using relevant ethical principles, as addressed by the APA code of ethics. Students will reflect thoughtfully upon areas in which the code provides clear direction, as well as areas of ambiguity. Students will conduct an ethical cost/benefit analysis, using the code to inform their analysis, when evaluating policies and procedures. This will occur via written assignments or other course-related activities. See Appendix C for relevant assignments and course-related activities.

Priority Two: Assess Student Learning Outcome 1.3 – Scientific Writing.

Learning Outcome 1.3 states that students should:

1. Quote, paraphrase, and cite correctly from a variety of sources ethically and responsibly.
2. Define and avoid plagiarism.
3. Avoid distorting statistical results
4. Demonstrate professional writing conventions (e.g., grammar, audience awareness, formality) appropriate to purpose and context.

5. Use APA style effectively in empirically-based reports, literature reviews, and theoretical papers.

In each course we offer, we have specified the level of proficiency students should demonstrate with regard to scientific writing. The following rubric was instituted to evaluate proficiency in this context (adapted from APA, 2008).

1 = Basic: Students will apply basic APA standards and style in writing about research.

2 = Developing: Students will explain (in writing) the purpose, methods, results, and conclusions of a data collection project using APA writing standards.

3 = Advanced: Students will write a comprehensive research review paper or all sections of a research report based on their own original research. Students will apply APA writing standards and adeptly integrate information from multiple sources.

References

American Psychological Association. (2008). Teaching, learning, and assessing in a developmentally coherent curriculum. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association, Board of Educational Affairs. Retrieved from www.apa.org/ed/resources.html.