

SACS OUTCOME MAPPING FOR THE PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM (2011-2012)

The Psychology program has established measurable outcomes for self-evaluation based on the learning goals and outcomes recommended by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2006; see www.apa.org/ed/resources.html). Outcomes were selected from those offered by the APA based on their relative importance and measurability.

The data continue to suggest that our program is teaching core content exceptionally well, as represented by the high percent of students performing well on the ETS exit exam (see Outcome 1), and by our students' strong communication skills (see Outcome 3). This includes having met new benchmarks in each of these outcomes, which we will continue to monitor to ensure that these domains remain strengths of our program.

We did not consistently meet our benchmarks for two of the outcomes – those regarding understanding and application of research methods (see Outcome 2) and information competence through technology/computer skills (see Outcome 4). We already spend a considerable time training students in these domains and believe that these scores do not necessarily represent a failure to achieve the outcome as a whole, rather they may reflect preparation for the culminating experience itself. As part of our plans for improvement on these outcomes, we first attempted (in spring 2011) to better link the experiences in the two experimental psychology classes to ensure that the measured outcomes represent a culminating, sequential experience rather than an experience in each individual course. We have since also reorganized the courses, into a statistics (315) and methods (318) division of content, with hopes of allowing students to focus on smaller segments of content at a time and hopefully better master the material. Though we failed to meet some of these outcomes this year, we will continue to monitor them, particularly as the faculty adjusts to the new course division. See Outcomes 2 and 4 for more detail.

Furthermore, we have identified a new outcome to begin assessing starting fall of 2011. This fifth outcome (see Outcome 5) is also based in the APA outcomes, focusing on career planning and preparation. We feel that this goal is vital to ensuring that our students receive an education that is practical to their needs. Past data were available on one of the assessments and have been included to describe past program performance.

OUTCOME 1	Students will demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.	
COURSES THAT ASSESS OUTCOME	Psych 101, Psych 475, Psych 480	
KEY ASSESSMENT TOOLS	Tests, Presentations	
KEY EXPERIENCES THAT HELP STUDENTS MEET OUTCOMES	History paper, Senior Seminar presentations, Class debates	
CULMINATING PROFICIENCY MEASUREMENT	History Final Exam (Psych 475)	Major Field Exam (Psych 480)
BENCHMARK	70% of students receiving a C (70%) on the exam or above	80% of students scoring above the 25th percentile
DATA	F2011: 14/17 (82.4%) – GOAL IS MET S2012: 17/17 (100%) – GOAL IS MET	F2011: 12/13 (92.3%) – GOAL IS MET S2012: 22/24 (91.7%) – GOAL IS MET
PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT	Our program continues to be highly successful for this outcome, meeting the new benchmarks. We will continue monitoring using the new benchmarks to determine a future course of action.	

OUTCOME 2	Students will understand and apply basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretation.	
COURSES THAT ASSESS OUTCOME	Psych 315, Psych 318, Psych 320 or 470	
KEY ASSESSMENT TOOLS	SPSS assignments, Writing literature reviews, Quizzes over research content areas	
KEY EXPERIENCES THAT HELP STUDENTS MEET OUTCOMES	Group oral presentation, Professional presentations	
CULMINATING PROFICIENCY MEASUREMENT	Successful completion of Psychology 315	Successful completion of Psychology 318
BENCHMARK	70% of students receiving a 70% (C) in the course or above	70% of students receiving a 68% (C) in the course or above
DATA	F2011: 31/40 (77.5%) – GOAL IS MET S2012: 22/29 (75.9%) – GOAL IS MET	F2011: 22/28 (78.6%) – GOAL IS MET S2012: 28/36 (77.8%) – GOAL IS MET
PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT	After making adjustments to the course content in both 315 and 318, changing the sequence to fit a stats/methods format, both benchmarks were met in the 2011-2012 academic year. These benchmarks will be monitored for another two years to evaluate whether they are being met consistently.	

OUTCOME 3	Students will be able to communicate effectively in a variety of formats.
COURSES THAT ASSESS OUTCOME	Psych 315, Psych 318, Psych 475, Psych 480
KEY ASSESSMENT TOOLS	Written assignments, In-class debate, Oral presentations
KEY EXPERIENCES THAT HELP STUDENTS MEET OUTCOMES	Job interviews, In-class debates, oral presentations
CULMINATING PROFICIENCY MEASUREMENT	Professional Portfolio Overall Grade (Psych 480)
BENCHMARK	70% of students receiving an average of 70% overall on the assignment or above
DATA	F2011: 14/14 (100%) – GOAL IS MET S2012: 24/24 est. (100%) – GOAL IS MET
PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT	After raising the benchmark beginning this year, our program has been successful for this outcome. We will continue to monitor this outcome using the new benchmark for the 2012-2013 academic year.

OUTCOME 4	Students will demonstrate information competence and the ability to use computers and other technology for many purposes.
COURSES THAT ASSESS OUTCOME	Psych 110 and 120 (101), Psych 301, Psych 315, Psych 318, Psych 475, Psych 480
KEY ASSESSMENT TOOLS	Typed assignments/papers, SPSS assignments/quizzes
KEY EXPERIENCES THAT HELP STUDENTS MEET OUTCOMES	PowerPoint presentations, SPSS training/assignments, Computer simulations, Blackboard class integration
CULMINATING PROFICIENCY MEASUREMENT	SPSS-based Laboratory Exam (Psych 318 2011 and earlier, Psych 315 starting 2012)
BENCHMARK	50% of students receiving a grade of C (meaning 68% 2011 and earlier, 70% starting 2012) on the SPSS lab exam or above
DATA	F2011: 10/30 (33.3%) – GOAL IS NOT MET S2012: 13/29 est. (44.8%) – GOAL IS NOT MET
PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT	These benchmarks were not met this year. We will continue to monitor this outcome as the faculty adjusts to the new stats/method format instituted in spring 2011.

OUTCOME 5 (NEW)	Students will pursue realistic ideas about how to implement their psychological knowledge, skills, and values in occupational pursuits in a variety of settings that meet personal goals and societal needs.	
COURSES THAT ASSESS OUTCOME	Psych 101, Psych 301, Psych 315, Psych 480	
KEY ASSESSMENT TOOLS	Tests, Presentations	
KEY EXPERIENCES THAT HELP STUDENTS MEET OUTCOMES	Discussion of psychology sub-disciplines, Discussion of psychology careers, Academic advising, Personal mentoring, Career fairs	
CULMINATING PROFICIENCY MEASUREMENT	Career planning assignment (Psych 480)	Attending professional conferences
BENCHMARK	70% of students scoring 70% overall on the assignment or above	4 psychology majors attending at least one regional, national, or international conference (per academic year)
DATA	F2011: 13/14 (92.9%) – GOAL IS MET S2012: 23/24 est. (95.8% est.) – GOAL IS MET	2008-2009: 9 GOAL IS MET 2009-2010: 9 – GOAL IS MET 2010-2011: 21 – GOAL IS MET 2011-2012: 12 – GOAL IS MET
PLAN FOR IMPROVEMENT	Though new, we did have old data on one of the assessments that are included above. We have also decided to add an advanced experimental course to the curriculum for fall 2013 in order to better prepare students who plan to pursue post-baccalaureate education.	