College of Liberal Arts & Sciences

Psychology Department

Doctoral Program

Ph.D.

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1. Introduction

Begin the assessment plan with a brief introduction describing the relevant history/evolution of the program and the program goals as they are now. Describe significant factors that help in placing the assessment plan in context (e.g., a new minor, shifting demand, market forces, the need for revised student learning outcomes, the need for more appropriate/valid information, new accreditation standards, department organizational changes, retention issues, and the like). Readers of the assessment plan will benefit from knowing how the degree program is evolving and how the new assessment plan will strategically provide the program with actionable data.

The Ph.D. program in psychology is designed to prepare students for psychology careers in a wide variety of professional settings including academic, human services, educational, mental health care, business, and government. The program is highly attractive to prospective students because it provides an active, vibrant context within which to pursue their professional goals. The integration of professional mentoring, course work, research, and applied experiences within the program enables students to pursue specialized areas of emphasis and a wide variety of professional goals in psychology. The synthesis of both formal and informal pedagogical experiences within the Ph.D. program provides rigorous training and ensures students' successful entry into the professional settings that are pursued.

Our assessment plan reflects the skills and knowledge needed to be successful in those careers with a large focus on research-related goals. Although each student's curriculum and other pedagogical experiences are individualized, six primary learning objectives have been identified for students completing the Ph.D. program:

1. Students will develop advanced competencies in research methodology necessary for the completion of original scholarship in the field of psychology.
2. Students will complete a research project that demonstrates the ability to conduct original scholarship that makes a substantial contribution to the field of psychology.
3. Students will develop comprehensive knowledge of their specialty area in psychology.
4. Students interested in teaching careers will develop and demonstrate teaching effectiveness.
5. Students in applied areas of psychology will develop applied skills associated with professional practice in their area of specialty.
6. Students will develop the expertise necessary for successful entry into applied academic, business, government, and health related professional settings.

2. Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

List the degree program student learning outcomes in the space provided below. Do not include overall program goals (e.g., recruit more minority students, post-graduation employment, etc.). See the *UAP Academic Program Assessment Plan and Status Report Rubric-Checklist* for a list of characteristics often seen in well-crafted student learning outcomes. It is not expected that all characteristics are present, but that essential ones are there, such as:

- Student learning outcomes are **student learning focused**;
- Student learning outcomes are **observable and measurable**;
- A sufficient number of student learning outcomes to add depth/breadth (>3), but so many as to become cumbersome/intrusive (<12), 6-8 is manageable (unless mandated by accreditation); and
- Student learning outcomes **differentiate** the program from similar programs.

The goal is to continually improve student learning outcomes over time to meet program strategic needs. Aim for higher order and more valued outcomes.

Student Learning Outcome 1. Doctoral students will develop the competencies in research methodology necessary for the completion of original scholarship in the field of psychology.

Program-level Target: The target will be that students have an average proficiency in two research tools courses ("B") or high proficiency ("A") in one research tool course. 90% of program students will successfully reach that level of proficiency in the tool course(s).

Assessment Method: Doctoral students' records will be evaluated to assess their performance in designated tool courses.

Student Learning Outcome 2. Doctoral students will have a comprehensive knowledge of their specialty area in psychology.

Program-level Target: The target will be that 90% of students sitting for the Candidacy Exam will successfully complete the exam.

Assessment Method: Evaluate the Candidacy Exam by a committee of department faculty members.

Student Learning Outcome 3. For those students in applied areas of psychology, the development of applied skills associated with professional practice in their area of specialty.

Program-level Target:

a) 90% of students in applied programs (i.e. clinical and school) will complete required practicum courses.

b) 100% of students in applied programs (i.e. clinical and school) seeking an internship will successfully obtain an approved internship and that 100% of interns will receive an acceptable evaluation by their supervisor.

Assessment Method: The placement records of each student will be examined in the applied programs (school and clinical psychology) every 3 years to assess success in practicum completion and internship placements.

Student Learning Outcome 4. All students complete a research project that demonstrates the ability to conduct original scholarship and makes a substantial contribution to the field of psychology.

Program-level Target:

a) 80% of students will successfully complete the dissertation and 90% of students completing the dissertation will receive a Dean's Designee rating of "agree" or "strongly agree" for the degree to which the dissertation made a "substantial contribution to knowledge."

b) 90% of students will successfully complete the oral defense and 90% of students completing the dissertation will receive a Dean's Designee rating of "agree" or "strongly agree" for the degree to which the oral defense was "sufficiently rigorous for a research-doctoral degree."

Assessment Method: Student records will be examined to assess whether the evaluation of the written and oral dissertation by the committee of department and outside department faculty members indicated a pass.

Student Learning Outcome 5. Demonstration of teaching effectiveness.

Program-level Target: 80% of students will receive student ratings of "good," "very good," or "excellent."

Assessment Method: The Director of Graduate Studies, in conjunction with the appropriate faculty, will examine the evaluations of doctoral students serving as instructors or laboratory assistants for proficiency as defined above.

Student Learning Outcome 6. Successful entry into applied, academic, business, government, and health related professional settings.

Program-level Target: 90% of alumni will rate their initial placements as "related" or "very related" to their graduate training.

Assessment Method: Prior alumni survey will be examined for alumni ratings.

Student Learning Outcome 7. Matriculation and successful degree completion of students from protected-class groups.

Program-level Target: None specified in current plan.

Assessment Method: Maintain a record of number of women and minority students admitted and graduated relative to published national data.

3. Program-by-Baccalaureate Student Learning Outcomes Matrix – N/A

This second section of the assessment plan is optional but **highly encouraged**. It is an alignment of your degree program student learning outcomes with the university baccalaureate student learning outcomes. **This applies only to undergraduate degree programs.**

4. Curriculum Map

The third section is a curriculum map (and is also optional but **highly encouraged**). A curriculum map outlines the scope and sequence of courses students will take and aligns them with the degree program student learning outcomes. The curriculum map is an effective tool for not only sequencing the curriculum and instruction, but also for strategically identifying places for formative and summative assessments of student learning outcomes.

Required core courses are listed along the vertical axis of the matrix in chronological order. Degree program student learning outcomes are listed on the horizontal axis. For each course determine: (1) which outcomes are the *primary* focus of the course, and (2) the degree to which the course supports the outcome (i.e., at a beginning (B), developing (D), or proficient (P) level). Place a B, D, or P in the corresponding cell. It would be *unusual* to find all courses supporting all student learning outcomes—instead, concentrate on the primary focus of each course. This will map out the degree to which core courses support the development of your program student learning outcomes. The Four-Year Degree Path provided by the Office of Student Academic Success may be helpful (www.niu.edu/osas/DegreePaths). Look for strengths and gaps in the curriculum. Ideally, all outcomes should be supported with coursework through the proficient level. Below is an example of a curriculum map you can modify or model. Note that each course should address at least one student learning outcome, but does NOT have to support all learning outcomes.

Course	Program Student Learning Outcomes						
	1 - Research Methodology	2. Knowledge in specific area	3. Professional skill development	4. Original scholarship	5. Teaching Effectiveness	6. Placement in field	7. Focus on protected-groups ?
PSYC 528		B/D					
PSYC 571		B/D					
PSYC 581		B/D					
PSYC 601	B	D					
PSYC 603	B	B/D					
PSYC 604	B			B			
PSYC 606	D			B			
PSYC 607	D	B		D			
PSYC 611	B	B					

Course	Program Student Learning Outcomes						
	1 - Research Methodology	2. Knowledge in specific area	3. Professional skill development	4. Original scholarship	5. Teaching Effectiveness	6. Placement in field	7. Focus on protected-groups ?
PSYC 612	D	D					
PSYC 613		B/D					
PSYC 614					B/D		
PSYC 615	B	D	B				
PSYC 616	B	D	B				
PSYC 617	B	D	B				
PSYC 618	D	D	B				
PSYC 619	D	D	B				
PSYC 620	B	B/D					
PSYC 621	B	B/D					
PSYC 622	D	D					
PSYC 624	D	D					
PSYC 625	D	D					
PSYC 627	D	D	B				
PSYC 628	D	D	B				
PSYC 629	D	D	B				
PSYC 630	D	D	B				
PSYC 639		P	D			D	
PSYC 640	D	B	B				
PSYC 641	B	B	B				
PSYC 642	D	B	B				
PSYC 643	B	B					
PSYC 644		B	B/D				
PSYC 646	D	D	D			B	
PSYC 647		D	D			B	
PSYC 648		D	D			B	

Course	Program Student Learning Outcomes						
	1 - Research Methodology	2. Knowledge in specific area	3. Professional skill development	4. Original scholarship	5. Teaching Effectiveness	6. Placement in field	7. Focus on protected-groups ?
PSYC 649		P	P			P	
PSYC 651			P			P	
PSYC 652-4			D			P	
PSYC 655-6			P			P	
PSYC 665	D	D					
PSYC 670-2	D	D		D			
PSYC 675	D	D		B			
PSYC 676	D	D		B			
PSYC 677	D	D		B			
PSYC 678	D	D		B			
PSYC 679	B	P					D
PSYC 680		P		D			
PSYC 681			D		P	D	
PSYC 685	D	D	D	D		D	
PSYC 690	D	D	D	D	D		
PSYC 699	P			P			
PSYC 710	P	D		D			
PSYC 712	P	D		D			
PSYC 714	P	D		D			
PSYC 799	P		P	P		P	
Note. Course supports the outcome at the B=beginning, D=developing, or P=proficient level.							

5. Assessment Methods

This final section of the assessment plan describes the assessment methods your degree program will be using to measure how well students are meeting program student learning outcomes. See the *UAP Academic Program Assessment Plan and Status Report Rubric-Checklist* for a description of characteristics seen in well-functioning assessment methods.

EXPLANATION OF ASSESSMENT METHODS TABLE

The first part of the assessment methods section is an explanation of each assessment method you will be using to measure student learning outcomes. The description needs to be in enough detail to communicate to others what each assessment is, when it will be given, who is responsible for carrying out the assessment, what the desired target level of individual student performance is (to say a single student met the student learning outcome(s)), and what the desired overall target level of performance is for all students (to say the program is meeting the outcome(s)). Individual student-level achievement targets are often preset scores on an exam, scores on a rubric, etc. Program-level targets are often expressed as the percent of students demonstrating they meet individual student-level achievement targets. See the *UAP Academic Program Assessment Plan and Status Report Rubric-Checklist* for a list of characteristics seen in well-functioning assessment methods. Below is the table you should use to clearly communicate each of the assessment methods to other stakeholders.

| Assessment Method | Explanation | | | | | |
	Description	Student-Level Achievement [a]	Program-Level Target [b]	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
Examination of graduate student records	- SLO1 Grade records of doctoral students will be used to assess "tool" courses for the doctoral degree. - SLO3 Clinical and school graduate students complete practicum courses to develop and refine their professional skills. - Final letter grades or S/U/I of 20 students, randomly selected, will be assessed for the student learning outcomes.	- For tool classes, a student will receive a letter grade of B or better on two tool courses, or a grade of A in one tool course. - For practicum courses, the student must pass the practicum courses (grading is S/U/I).	90% of all students will meet the student-level target or better.	Following the spring semester, every 3 years.	Faculty for student-level achievement, Chair for program-level target.	1, 3

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement [a]	Program-Level Target [b]	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
Evaluate Candidacy Exams	Students are required to take candidacy exam that is customized to the sub-discipline of the student. A committee of faculty members with appropriate knowledge then reviews the written responses by each student to determine if the responses do not meet the expectation (0), partially meets expectation (1) or fully meets expectation (2). One year of students' exams will be assessed.	To meet SLO a score of 2 must be met.	90% of all students will meet the student-level target (2).	Following the spring semester, every 3 years.	Faculty for student-level achievement, Chair for program-level target.	1, 2
Assess the evaluation by the internship supervisor	Clinical and school graduate students' complete approved internships to develop and refine their professional skills. One year of students' evaluations will be assessed.	A positive evaluation by the supervisor.	100% of all students will obtain an approved internship and receive a positive evaluation.	Following the spring semester, every 3 years.	Supervisor for student-level achievement, Chair for program-level target.	3, 6

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement [a]	Program-Level Target [b]	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
Evaluate written dissertation and oral defenses	The faculty members assembled as the dissertation committee and the Dean's designee, separately, submit evaluations of the written dissertation and oral defense of each dissertation. Both evaluations will be assessed for the prior academic year of students' dissertations.	A positive evaluation by the committee, receiving a "pass" for their written dissertation and oral defense. A positive rating of "agree"(3) or "strongly agree"(4) by the dean's designee that the dissertation mad a substantial contribution to knowledge.	80% of all students will receive a pass by the dissertation committee; 90% of students will receive a rating of 3 or higher by the Dean's designee.	Following the spring semester, every 3 years.	Dissertation committee members and Dean's designee for student-level, Chair for program-level	1,2,4
Assess teaching evaluations of graduate students	For students serving as instructors, the student ratings on the department teaching effectiveness scale will be reviewed. 20 students' will be selected randomly for evaluation following the spring semester.	There is a 5 point evaluation scale with 1 being an excellent and 5 being poor.	80% of students will receive an overall teaching rating of "good"(3) or better.	Following the spring semester.	Chair and Graduate director or appropriate faculty	5

Assessment Method	Explanation					
	Description	Student-Level Achievement [a]	Program-Level Target [b]	When Data Will be Collected	Person Responsible	SLOs
Evaluate alumni survey for rating of initial job placement	The alumni survey that NIU prepares each year will be probed for Q11, Q14 and Q15. Average ratings will be calculated for all respondents in the prior academic year for the most recent data available. In addition, the proportion of respondents for each category will be considered.	Q14 and Q15 responses will address the successful entry of the doctoral students into a professional setting, using both the average and proportional data.	Q11 responses will address whether the doctoral program appropriate trains our students for entry into the workforce.	Every 2 years for the annual assessment, when the data is available.	Chair, recent doctoral graduates.	6

Note. [a] Student-level target is the score or performance an individual student must demonstrate to say the student met the student learning outcome. [b] Program-level target is the percent of all students that must demonstrate they meet the student learning outcome.

ASSESSMENT METHODS-BY-OUTCOMES MATRIX

The assessment methods section concludes with an assessment methods-by-outcomes matrix that maps which assessments will measure a given student learning outcome. Use your curriculum map to identify key places in the curriculum where you could capture already existing assessment data to use as a measure of program student learning outcomes (e.g., major projects/performances, capstone experiences, etc.). Outcomes are listed in the first row, and each assessment method is listed in the first column. It is useful if assessments are listed in chronological order, from the first students will see, to the last. For each assessment method determine: (1) which outcome(s) it *primarily* measures, (2) if it is being used for formative (F) or summative (S) purposes, and (3) whether it is an indirect (I) or direct (D) measure of the student learning outcome. Formative assessments occur earlier in the curriculum and are used to see if students are on track and progressing sufficiently; summative assessments occur at or near the end of the curriculum and are used to see if students have successfully met the program student learning outcomes. Direct assessments are those that compellingly and clearly measure student performance (e.g., exam score, performance assessment, direct observation). Indirect assessments are rough estimates and proxies of student performance (e.g., self-reports of learning, alumni perceptions, etc.). Place an F or S <u>and</u> an I or D in the corresponding cell. This will map out where your degree program is planning to conduct formative and summative assessments using direct and/or indirect methods. Look for opportunities and gaps. *Capitalize on what you are already doing.* See how it aligns with the curriculum map. Below is an example of an assessment methods-by-outcomes matrix you can modify or model. Note that each assessment method does NOT have to measure ALL student learning outcomes. All assessment methods should be explained in the *Explanation of Assessment Methods* table.

Assessment Method	Program Student Learning Outcome						
	1. Research methodology	2. Knowledge in specific area	3. Professional skill development	4. Original scholarship	5. Teaching effectiveness	6. Placement in field	7. Focus on protected-groups?
Examination of graduate student records	S, D	S, D					
Evaluate Candidacy Exams	S, D	S, D					
Assess the evaluation by the internship supervisor			S, I			S, I	
Evaluate written dissertation and oral defenses	S, D	S, D		S,D			
Assess teaching evaluations of graduate students					S, I		
Evaluate alumni survey for rating of initial job placement						S, I	
Note. F=formative assessment, S=summative assessment, D=direct assessment, and I=indirect assessment. See the paragraph above for an explanation of each type of assessment.							