

Psychology MA

Program Mission Statement

Program Mission Statement (Full Description):

This non-terminal masters degree is awarded after three years of core coursework (36 hours), one year on practicum in the internal Psychology Clinic, and the completion of the Masters thesis. Note that this degree is not a terminal professional degree, but is an intermediate degree awarded en route to the Clinical Psychology Ph.D. As such, it shares some of the same goals and outcomes as the Ph.D. program.

Does your program offer courses at an off-campus instructional site (not at SMU Dallas campus)?: No

Does your program offer courses through distance education technology (e.g., asynchronous, synchronous, or both)?:

No

During which academic year were students first enrolled in this program?: Prior to AY2021-2022

Progress: Complete

1 PLO1: Research Fundamentals

Step 1C: PLO Statement (Full Description):

Students will demonstrate knowledge of the basic fundamentals of psychological science and research.

Step 2A: Measure :

Our measure of this outcome is students successfully defending their masters' thesis with committee approval. Masters theses in our department are required to be research studies conducted largely independently by the student (with faculty supervision). All thesis projects must be proposed to and approved by a committee of faculty members. Subsequently, students must conduct a research project and write up a thesis. Finally, students must defend their thesis to demonstrate to the satisfaction of their committee that the student has gained knowledge of the basic fundamentals of psychological research.

Step 2B: Type of Measure (check all that apply): Dissertation defense

Step 2C: Is Measure direct or indirect?: Direct

Step 3A: Target for Measure:

Our goal is for 80% of third-year students in the program to have successfully defended their masters' thesis. Note, the MA is a non-terminal degree that is earned as part of the PhD program. Thus, measuring this goal in the third year of the PhD program captures the extent to which students successfully defended their masters' thesis by this time.

Step 4A: Was the target met for this Measure?: Not Met

Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:

There were a total of 3 third-year students in the program. Of them, 2 students (67%) successfully defended their masters' thesis. One student did not defend their thesis. This student is expected to defend their thesis in the coming year.

Step 4C: Interpretation of Results :

Our department did not meet its goal of having at least 80% of third-year students defend their masters' thesis. Given the small sample size (n=3), it is hard to concretely interpret this finding. However, it may indicate that further structure is needed to help students demonstrate master of research fundamentals by the end of their third year in the program.

Step 5A: Use of Results for Seeking Improvement (Action Plan) :

We will continue to monitor this goal over the next few years before deciding whether to make any changes to the goal. Faculty discussion on the topic has led to the conclusion that students who do not meet deadlines (such as successfully defending their thesis by the end of their third year) should be put on "performance improvement plans" designed to give them further structure and scaffolding in completing program milestones. Performance improvement plans will be created in conjunction with the students' research advisor and department leadership.

Step 5B: Type of Action: Program leadership involvement

Faculty involvement

Step 5C: Dialogue Participants (check all that apply): Faculty

Step 5D: Evidence of Dialogue :

This goal was discussed in a faculty meeting in late fall 2023, as well as in a Department Leadership meeting on November 20, 2023.

Step 5E: Type of other Improvements (check all that apply):

Step 5F: Other Improvements (Full Description):

Step 6A: Status Update on Action(s) Identified in the Previous Assessment Cycle (Full Description):

No plans were made in the previous cycle.

Step 6B: Status Update on Previously Identified Action Plan(s): Not applicable for this cycle (explain in Step 6A)

Progress: Complete

2 PLO2: Evidence-Based Assessment

Step 1C: PLO Statement (Full Description):

Students will demonstrate knowledge of basic fundamentals of evidence-based assessments.

Step 2A: Measure :

The measure for this goal is the final report in PSYC 6354 ("Assessment Practicum"). This final project requires students to complete a comprehensive integrated psychological assessment, utilizing a cognitive, academic, and personality measure--as well as including background information and observations from clinical interviews.

Step 2B: Type of Measure (check all that apply): Written paper/project

Step 2C: Is Measure direct or indirect?: Direct

Step 3A: Target for Measure:

Our goal is for 80% of students in PSYC 6354 to earn a 4 or 5 on the final project.

Step 4A: Was the target met for this Measure?: Met

Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:

There were a total of 5 students enrolled in PSYC 6354 this year. Of these students, 4 (80%) received a score of 4 or 5 on the final project.

Step 4C: Interpretation of Results :

This goal was met, which indicates that our department is successfully teaching students the basics of evidence-based assessment during the masters' program.

Step 5A: Use of Results for Seeking Improvement (Action Plan) :

We will continue to monitor this goal for several years before deciding whether changes are necessary.

Step 5B: Type of Action:

Step 5C: Dialogue Participants (check all that apply): Faculty

Step 5D: Evidence of Dialogue :

This goal was discussed at a Department Leadership meeting on November 20, 2023.

Step 5E: Type of other Improvements (check all that apply):

Step 5F: Other Improvements (Full Description):

Step 6A: Status Update on Action(s) Identified in the Previous Assessment Cycle (Full Description):

We will continue to monitor this goal for several years before deciding whether changes are necessary.

Step 6B: Status Update on Previously Identified Action Plan(s): Not applicable for this cycle (explain in Step 6A)

Progress: Complete

3 PLO3: Evidence-Based Therapy

Step 1C: PLO Statement (Full Description):

Students will demonstrate knowledge of the basic fundamentals of evidence-based psychotherapy treatment.

Step 2A: Measure :

The measure for this goal is the final project in PSYC 6351 ("Theories and Methods of Psychotherapy"). This final project requires students to perform a systematic written review of evidence-based treatments for a disorder, description of therapeutic techniques, and at least one example of a specific clinical application of the treatment. Students must also present their final projects in-class.

Step 2B: Type of Measure (check all that apply): Presentation
Written paper/project

Step 2C: Is Measure direct or indirect?: Direct

Step 3A: Target for Measure:

Our goal is for at least 80% of students in PSYC 6351 to earn a 4 or 5 on the final project.

Step 4A: Was the target met for this Measure?: No data collected/reported this cycle (provided explanation)

Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:

This goal is new; it was created in November 2023. Thus, no data are available for this goal.

Step 4C: Interpretation of Results :

This goal is new; it was created in November 2023. Thus, no data are available for this goal.

Step 5A: Use of Results for Seeking Improvement (Action Plan) :

We will collect data for the first time on this goal in the 2023-2024 academic year.

Step 5B: Type of Action: Additional activities or assignments

Step 5C: Dialogue Participants (check all that apply): Faculty

Step 5D: Evidence of Dialogue :

This goal was discussed during the November 20 Department Leadership meeting.

Step 5E: Type of other Improvements (check all that apply):

Step 5F: Other Improvements (Full Description):

Step 6A: Status Update on Action(s) Identified in the Previous Assessment Cycle (Full Description):

No plans were made in the previous cycle.

Step 6B: Status Update on Previously Identified Action Plan(s): Not applicable for this cycle (explain in Step 6A)

Progress: Complete

4 PLO4: Statistics

Step 1C: PLO Statement (Full Description):

Students will demonstrate mastery of common statistical techniques used in psychological research.

Step 2A: Measure :

The measure for this goal is students' performance across all exams in PSYC 6307 ("Quantitative Methods II"). The exams in PSYC 6307 collectively require students to demonstrate mastery of common statistical techniques, such as regression and ANOVA.

Step 2B: Type of Measure (check all that apply): Objective Quiz or Exam

Step 2C: Is Measure direct or indirect?: Direct

Step 3A: Target for Measure:

Our goal is for 80% of students to earn an average of 80% or higher across all exams in PSYC 6307.

Step 4A: Was the target met for this Measure?: No data collected/reported this cycle (provided explanation)

Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:

This goal is new. It was created in November 2023. Thus, no data are available for this goal.

Step 4C: Interpretation of Results :

This goal is new. It was created in November 2023. Thus, no data are available for this goal.

Step 5A: Use of Results for Seeking Improvement (Action Plan) :

We will measure data for this goal in the 2023-2024 academic year.

Step 5B: Type of Action: Additional activities or assignments

Step 5C: Dialogue Participants (check all that apply): Faculty

Step 5D: Evidence of Dialogue :

This goal was discussed in the November 20 Department Leadership Meeting.

Step 5E: Type of other Improvements (check all that apply):

Step 5F: Other Improvements (Full Description):

Step 6A: Status Update on Action(s) Identified in the Previous Assessment Cycle (Full Description):

No plans were made in the previous cycle.

Step 6B: Status Update on Previously Identified Action Plan(s): Not applicable for this cycle (explain in Step 6A)

Progress: Complete

1 PO: Presenting Research

Step 1C: PO Statement (Full Description):

The program will prepare students to engage with the research community by presenting their own personal research in a professional/academic setting

Step 2A: Measure :

The measure for this goal is students successfully giving a talk on their own original research during the department-wide colloquium.

Step 2B: Is Measure direct or indirect?: Indirect

Step 3A: Target for Measure:

Our goal is for 100% of second-year students to give a talk on their own original research during colloquium.

Step 4A: Was the target met for this Measure?: No data collected/reported this cycle (provided explanation)

Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:

This is a new goal for 2023. It was created in November 2023.

Step 4C: Interpretation of Results :

This is a new goal for 2023. It was created in November 2023.

Step 5A: Use of Results for Seeking Improvement (Action Plan) :

We will collect data for the 2023-2024 academic year.

Step 5B: Dialogue Participants (check all that apply): Faculty

Step 5C: Evidence of Dialogue :

This goal was discussed during the November 20, 2023 Department Leadership meeting.

Step 5D: Type of other Improvements (check all that apply):

Step 5E: Other Improvements (Full Description):

Step 6A: Status Update on Action(s) Identified in the Previous Assessment Cycle (Full Description):

No plans were made in the previous cycle.

Step 6B: Status Update on Previously Identified Action Plan(s): Not applicable for this cycle (explain in Step 6A)

Progress: Complete