

Psychology PhD

Program Mission Statement

Program Mission Statement (Full Description):

The American Psychological Association (APA) accredited Clinical Psychology Ph.D. program at Southern Methodist University (SMU) follows a clinical scientist model and is a member of the Academy of Psychological Clinical Science (APCS). As such, the primary goal of the program is to train psychological clinical scientists, and the single most important component of the doctoral training is research. To that end, we expect our students to be actively engaged in research throughout their training with SMU faculty members through collaborative, faculty-directed studies as well as studies in which students take a lead role. Students are expected to participate substantially in scientific publications, conference presentations, grant applications, and make other meaningful contributions to research. The clinical science model recognizes the reciprocal relationship between research and clinical application. Students should apply scientific knowledge to their clinical work as well as use their clinical work to inform their research. State-of-the-science training will be provided in evidence-based assessment, diagnosis, and intervention. (note the switch to a clinical science training model is fairly new and we are still in the process of developing new goals/outcomes/etc.)

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: Understand & Evaluate Research

Step 1C: PLO Statement (Full Description):

Graduates will be able to understand, evaluate, and integrate existing research literature.

Step 2A: Measure :

Review Paper. Generally in their third year of the program, students complete a review paper. This assignment requires students to complete a relatively comprehensive review of peer-reviewed research on a topic chosen in agreement with their research mentor.

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 fourth-year students to receive a satisfactory rating from their committee (4 or 5) on the review paper.

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

Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:

There were 3 fourth-year students in the program in academic year 2022-2023. All 3 (100%) of these students received a satisfactory rating from their committee on their review paper.

Step 4C: Interpretation of Results :

The goal for our learning objective was met this year. We will continue to monitor progress on this goal in upcoming years.

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

We will continue to monitor progress on this goal across the course of several years before making any conclusions as to whether this goal needs to be modified in any way.

Step 5B: Type of Action: Other

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

Step 5D: Evidence of Dialogue :

These issues were discussed among Department leadership on a November 20, 2023 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):

We will continue to monitor this goal across several years before making any decisions about potentially modifying or changing this goal.

Step 6B: Status Update on Previously Identified Action Plan(s): Fully implemented

Progress: Complete

2 PLO2: Conduct Research

Step 1C: PLO Statement (Full Description):

Graduates will be able to conceptualize, design, and conduct psychological research.

Step 2A: Measure :

The measure for this learning objective is students passing their dissertation defense. To pass the dissertation defense, students must propose an original, independent research project. After gaining committee approval, students will conduct the research study, analyze data, and write up a full dissertation. Students must defend their dissertation successfully, with a committee of faculty members voting to approve the dissertation.

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 sixth year students to successfully defend their dissertation.

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

Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:

There were a total of 7 sixth-year students in this academic year. A total of 6 (86%) of students successfully defended their dissertation.

Step 4C: Interpretation of Results :

Students in the PhD program are meeting expectations with respect to performing research.

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

We will continue to monitor progress on this goal across the course of several years before concluding whether changes are needed in the future.

Step 5B: Type of Action:

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

Step 5D: Evidence of Dialogue :

This goal was discussed during 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 progress on this goal across the course of several years before concluding whether changes are needed in the future.

Step 6B: Status Update on Previously Identified Action Plan(s): Fully implemented

Progress: Complete

3 PLO3: Publish Papers

Step 1C: PLO Statement (Full Description):

Graduates will be able to make meaningful contributions to research and the scientific literature.

Step 2A: Measure :

The measure is the number of peer-reviewed publications per student. Given that successfully publishing a peer-reviewed paper requires approval from multiple scientists (peer reviewers, journal editors), peer-reviewed publications are a direct measure per se of students' ability to meaningfully contribute to scientific literature.

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 all graduating students to publish at least 2 peer-reviewed papers by graduation.

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

Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:

There were a total of 6 graduates this year. All students had at least 2 peer-reviewed publications, with total publications ranging from 2 to 11.

Step 4C: Interpretation of Results :

All program graduates had at least 2 peer-reviewed publications, with some having substantially more publications. Given that successfully publishing a peer-reviewed paper requires approval from multiple scientists (peer reviewers, journal editors), peer-reviewed publications are a direct measure per se of students' ability to meaningfully contribute to scientific literature.

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

We will continue to monitor this goal for several years before making decisions as to whether it should be modified.

Step 5B: Type of Action:

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

Step 5D: Evidence of Dialogue :

This goal was discussed during 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 making decisions as to whether it should be modified.

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

Progress: Complete

4 PLO4: Evidence-Based Assessment

Step 1C: PLO Statement (Full Description):

Graduates will demonstrate competency in evidence-based assessment.

Step 2A: Measure :

Our measure for this outcome is (1) number of assessments completed in the in-house clinic, and (2) supervisor ratings of skill in completing assessments [1-5 scale].

Step 2B: Type of Measure (check all that apply): Observation
Performance

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

Step 3A: Target for Measure:

This goal is measured in the fifth year of our program. Our goal is for 80% of fifth-year students in the program to have (1) completed 12 assessments with (2) a supervisor rating of assessment skill of 4 or 5 (on a scale from 1-5).

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

Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:

We had a total of 3 fifth-year students. Due to COVID-based exceptions, all fifth-year students completed only 10 assessments. Due to personnel shifts over the past year, supervisor ratings were only available for one student, who received a rating of "5".

Step 4C: Interpretation of Results :

It is difficult to interpret these results given the unusual circumstances created by COVID and missing data due to personnel changes in the Department.

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

We will continue to monitor this goal over the next few years. We will be able to more meaningfully comment on goal progress after next year's data are available. We will improve tracking of supervisor ratings in the event of personnel changes.

Step 5B: Type of Action: Program leadership involvement

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

Step 5D: Evidence of Dialogue :

This goal was discussed during 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 over the next few years.

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

Progress: Complete

1 PO: Evidence-Based Treatment Experience

Step 1C: PO Statement (Full Description):

Program will prepare graduates to successfully demonstrate competency in evidence-based psychotherapy and gain experience in providing psychotherapy at external internship sites.

Step 2A: Measure :

This operational objective is measured as the number of students who successfully complete a clinical internship. Successful completion of an internship requires demonstration of psychotherapy skills that meet or exceed APA and external internship sites' expectations.

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

Step 3A: Target for Measure:

Our goal is for 80% of sixth-year students to successfully complete a clinical internship.

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

Step 4B: Results and Findings for this Measure:

We had a total of 7 sixth-year students this year. Of them, a total of 6 (86%) completed an internship. One student has not yet completed an internship but will do so next year.

Step 4C: Interpretation of Results :

The program is meeting the goal to train students who successfully demonstrate therapy skills by completing an external internship.

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 changes are needed.

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

Step 5C: Evidence of Dialogue :

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

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):

We will continue to monitor this goal over the next few years before deciding whether changes are needed.

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

Progress: Complete