

## SMSU Psychology Program Goals and Learning Outcomes

The SMSU Psychology Program goals and student learning outcomes are based on the **American Psychological Association Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major**. The APA Guidelines recommend a set of 10 goals and related learning outcomes that represent what is expected of students completing the baccalaureate degree with a major in psychology. The APA goals are divided into two major categories – the first five addressing core areas of competency within the psychology major, and the second five addressing complementary areas that are generally considered part of a liberal education but can be further developed through psychology coursework. A summary of the 10 APA learning goals is shown below. The specific student learning outcomes for each goal are not shown, but can be found in the document referenced at the bottom of the page.

### CORE LEARNING GOALS: Knowledge, Skills and Values Consistent with the Science and Application of Psychology

**GOAL 1: Knowledge Base of Psychology.** Students will demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.

**GOAL 2: Research Methods in Psychology.** Students will understand and apply basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretation.

**GOAL 3: Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology.** Students will respect and use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and, when possible, the scientific approach to solve problems related to behavior and mental processes.

**GOAL 4: Application of Psychology.** Students will understand and apply psychological principles to personal, social, and organizational issues.

**GOAL 5: Values in Psychology.** Students will be able to weigh evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and reflect other values that are the underpinnings of psychology as a discipline.

### COMPLEMENTARY LEARNING GOALS: Knowledge, Skills, and Values Consistent with Liberal Arts Education that are Further Developed in Psychology

**GOAL 6: Information and Technological Literacy.** Students will demonstrate information competence and the ability to use computers and other technology for many purposes.

**GOAL 7: Communication Skills.** Students will be able to communicate effectively in a variety of formats.

**GOAL 8: Sociocultural and International Awareness.** Students will recognize, understand, and respect the complexity of sociocultural and international diversity.

**GOAL 9: Personal Development.** Students will develop insight into their own and others' behavior and mental processes and apply effective strategies for self-management and self-improvement.

**GOAL 10: Career Planning and Development.** Students will emerge from the major with realistic ideas about how to implement their psychological knowledge, skills, and values in occupational pursuits in a variety of settings.

**APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major:**

<http://www.apa.org/ed/precollege/about/psymajor-guidelines.pdf>

Developed as a companion resource for implementing the APA guidelines, *The Assessment CyberGuide for Learning Goals and Outcomes* provides a wealth of assessment-related resources that can be used for understanding assessment, designing assessment plans, selecting appropriate assessment strategies, and sustaining a culture of assessment within psychology programs. This document presents a taxonomy of assessment measures (shown below) as well as a detailed analysis of the advantages and disadvantages of each type of measure. Recommendations regarding the use of these measures for assessing each of the 10 APA learning goals are provided. Further information can be found in the document referenced at the bottom of the page.

#### **Course Data**

Objective Tests (e.g., multiple choice, true-false, fill-in-the-blank items)  
Essay Tests  
Embedded Questions and/or Assignments  
Classroom Assessment Techniques (e.g., 1-minute papers, course focus groups, free-writing, etc.)

#### **Individual Projects/Performance Assessment**

Written Products (e.g., term papers, lab reports, critiques)  
New Oral Presentations (e.g., speeches, role plays)  
Graphic Tests and Displays  
Poster Presentations  
Structural/Situational Assessments

#### **Summative Performance Assessment**

Standardized Tests  
Locally-Developed Exams  
Capstone Experiences  
Internships/Professional Applications  
Portfolios  
Assessment Center Methods (e.g., in-baskets, guided problem-solving)  
Case or Longitudinal Studies

#### **Self-Assessment/Reflection**

Student Journals or Self-Critiques

#### **Collaboration**

Research Teams & Group Projects (e.g., written and oral)  
On-Line Group Activities (e.g., maintaining print record of interactions in chat room or other internet-based contact)

#### **Interviews and Surveys (Attitude Measurement)**

Satisfaction Measures (e.g., seniors, alumni, employers, graduate school advisors, parents)  
Performance Reviews (e.g., alumni, employers, graduate school advisors)  
Exit Interviews  
Focus Groups  
Follow-up Alumni Interviews  
External Examiner Interviews (exit interviews conducted by objective, external expert)

#### **Archival Measures**

Transcript Analysis / Analysis of Transfer Patterns  
Syllabus Audit  
Demographic Data Analysis  
Alumni Database  
Library Use Statistics / Web Hits

**The Assessment CyberGuide for Learning Goals and Outcomes:**

<http://www.apa.org/ed/governance/bea/assessment-cyberguide-v2.pdf>