Muskingum University
Department of Psychology

Mission Statement and Goals for Student Learning

The Psychology Department at Muskingum University is committed to maintaining a strong academic curriculum shaped by the mission of our University and the standards of a quality undergraduate psychology program as articulated by the American Psychological Association. Within this framework, the curriculum of the Department of Psychology program has been developed to introduce our students to the study of brain, mind and behavior as a scientific, scholarly discipline with applications to a variety of settings in clinical, counseling, educational, industrial, business, legal, and social settings. The Department endorses the challenge of the APA of “synthesizing the natural and social science aspects of the discipline by requiring students to take courses in both knowledge areas.”

The Psychology major emphasizes the importance of research skills in providing the knowledge and background for students to investigate the many foundations of behavior in a scientific manner. The Faculty believes that the basis for a strong undergraduate major is a solid ground in experimental and analytic methodology. Through this core students are provided a thorough background in the basic concepts, theories, and research findings of our discipline as well as a well developed set of research skills and experiences in thinking creatively and critically about behavior and its context.

Our introductory course is designed to assist students in developing an overview of psychology as they encounter the key ideas, works, persons, issues and values within the discipline. Students then are encouraged to enhance their research skills in a variety of settings from laboratory to independent field research projects. A series of content oriented courses are designed to introduce students in some depth to the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings and historical trends in the major fields of psychology. Internship opportunities are available for students to apply skills acquired in the classroom and laboratory to individual research programs or applied settings in counseling, educational and industrial settings. Finally all students are given the opportunity to conduct their own independent research program during their final two semesters in college, as capstone experience that demands an integration of previous learning.

Goals for Student Learning
The Department has selected as its program goals, those five articulated by the APA for undergraduate programs in Psychology as they relate to the science of Psychology. The APA further describes goals associated with the role of Psychology in Liberal Arts education more generally. While we try to follow and incorporate those additional goals in all our classes and activities, we have not formally identified them as such yet within the Department mission, but we’re certainly moving that way.

The five goals are:

**Goal 1:** Students should show familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.
Goal 2: Students should understand and apply basic research methods in psychology including research design, data analysis, and interpretation.

Goal 3: Students should 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: Students should understand and apply psychological principles to personal, social and organizational issues.

Goal 5: Students should be able to weigh evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and reflect other values that are the underpinning of psychology as a discipline.

Relation of APA Guidelines to Departmental Courses and Activities

A. Knowledge, Skills, and Values Consistent with the Science and Application of Psychology

1. Theory and Content: Student should show familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology
   - Introduction to Psychology
   - Required coursework in the following areas:
     - Biological Perspective
     - Cognitive/Social Perspective
     - Developmental Perspective
     - Clinical/Applied Perspective

2. Research Methods: Students should understand and apply basic research methods in psychology including research design, data analysis, and interpretation
   - General Experimental Psychology
   - Behavioral Statistics
   - Advanced Experimental Psychology
   - Research Internship
   - Senior Research Project

3. Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology: Students should respect and use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and, when possible, the scientific approach to solve problems related to behavior and mental processes.
   - Experimental Core Courses
   - Content Course Laboratories and Projects
   - Senior Research Project
   - Internships

4. Application of Psychology: Students should understand and apply psychological principles to personal, social and organizational issues.
Internships
Department-supported student organizations: e.g., Psi Chi and Psychology Club
Student involvement with the Center for Child Development

5. Values in Psychology: Students should be able to weigh evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and reflect other values that are the underpinning of psychology as a discipline.
   Experimental Core Courses
   Personality and Counseling Courses
   Internships
   Senior Research Project

B. Knowledge, Skills, and Values Consistent with Liberal Arts Education that are Further Developed in Psychology

6. Information and Technology Literacy: Students should demonstrate information competence and the ability to use computers and other technology for many purposes.
   Experimental Core Courses
   Behavioral Statistics
   Senior Research Project
   Conference Presentations
   Poster Sessions - On Campus and at Student and Regional Conferences
   Internships

7. Communication Skills: Students should be able to communicate effectively in a variety of formats.
   Senior Seminar
   Internships
   Conference Presentations
   Poster Sessions - On Campus and at Student and Professional Conferences
   Class Presentations
   Written Assignments for All Courses

8. Sociocultural and International Awareness: Students should recognize, understand, and respect the complexity of sociocultural and international diversity.
   Internships
   Social Psychology
   Developmental Psychology courses
   Theories of Personality
   Abnormal Psychology

9. Personal Development: Students should develop insight into their own and others; behavior and mental processes and apply effective strategies for self-management and self-improvement.
   Developmental Psychology courses
Social Psychology
Cognitive Processes
Internships

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

Advanced Experimental Psychology
Senior Seminar
Departmental Advising System