

**Degree: Undergraduate baccalaureate program in psychology**  
2023-2024 Assessment Plan

	<b>Student Learning Outcome #1</b>	Students graduating with a bachelor's degree in psychology should display evidence of critical thinking.
<b>PLAN</b>	<b>Assessment Method(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Methods in Psychology and Experimental Psychology final papers are evaluated by faculty (not those who teach the evaluated course) for evidence of critical thinking using an adapted version of the AACU VALUE rubric for Critical Thinking.</li> <li>2) A faculty developed rubric is used to score student performance. We assess thesis statements, quality of the idea, and organization of the introduction for student papers in Research Methods (3302), and Experimental Psychology (4330)</li> </ol>
	<b>Proficiency</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Proficient students are expected to show the following levels of performance in critical thinking: 1.40 on Methods papers 1.80 on Experimental Psychology proposals 2.80 on Experimental Psychology reports</li> <li>2) Proficient students are expected to show the following average level of performance on the rubric dimensions of thesis statement, quality of idea, and organization of introduction: PSYC 3302 papers should average 1.80 PSYC 4330 research proposals should average 2.40 PSYC 4330 final reports should average 2.80</li> </ol>
<b>DO</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Students will show incremental increases in critical thinking: At least 1.60 on Methods papers At least 2.10 on Experimental Psychology proposals At least 3.10 on Experimental Psychology reports</li> <li>2) Students will show incremental increases in average performance on the rubric dimensions thesis statement, quality of idea, and organization of introduction:</li> </ol>

		<p>PSYC 3302 papers should average at least 2.10</p> <p>PSYC 4330 research proposals should average at least 2.60</p> <p>PSYC 4330 final reports should average 3.10</p>
	<b>Results of Assessment</b>	<p>1) Students obtained the following scores in critical thinking:</p> <p>Methods papers = 2.37 (Benchmark met)</p> <p>Experimental Psychology proposals = 2.72 (Benchmark met)</p> <p>Experimental Psychology reports = 2.95 (Proficiency met) (Benchmark not met)</p> <p>2) Students averaged the following scores across the rubric dimensions of thesis statement, quality of idea, and organization of introduction:</p> <p>PSYC 3302 papers = 2.96 (Benchmark met)</p> <p>PSYC 4330 research proposals = 2.94 (Benchmark met)</p> <p>PSYC 4330 final reports = 3.06 (Proficiency met) (Benchmark not met)</p>
<b>STUDY</b>	<b>Analysis of Results</b>	<p>1) Scores on critical thinking mostly met benchmarks. Only the Experimental Psychology reports did not meet the benchmark; however, these students still met proficiency scores for critical thinking. Further analysis of the individual critical thinking rubric dimensions revealed that Experimental Psychology reports tended to score lower on the “conclusions &amp; implications” dimension. This dimension measures how closely aligned the student’s conclusions are to the body of evidence presented in their paper, including evidence that did not support the majority viewpoints reviewed in the paper. This result suggests an avenue for future improvement on critical thinking scores.</p> <p>2) Scores reflecting the quality of students’ thesis statements and organization of their paper introductions also mostly met benchmarks. Again, only the Experimental Psychology reports did not meet the benchmark; however, it did meet proficiency standards. The performance level (3.06) was extremely close to the recently raised benchmark (3.10); therefore, I am not particularly concerned about this result. If next year’s performance also falls short of this benchmark, then I will assign more significance to it and consider plans for improvement.</p>

<b>ACT</b>	<b>Improvement Plan for 2024-2025</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Based on the more detailed analysis of student performance on each critical thinking dimension, a specific area to target for improvement is “conclusions &amp; implications.” To improve scores on this dimension, those teaching the Experimental Psychology can stress to students the importance of qualifying conclusions they reach in their papers when there is evidence from opposing viewpoints. This is an important aspect of good critical thinking that is more difficult for students when they are trying to reach definitive and unidimensional conclusions about complex topics. The department chair will discuss ways the Experimental Psychology instructor can revise how students are taught to write the conclusion section of their paper.</li> <li>2) There are no plans for improvement or changing benchmarks for the quality of students’ thesis statements and organization of their paper introductions. Performance on this measure was very close to meeting the recently raised benchmark. The department chair will monitor performance on this measure to see if the benchmark is again unmet next year before implementing any kind of plan for improvement.</li> </ol>
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	<b>Student Learning Outcome #2</b>	Students will understand and appreciate the use of the scientific method in psychology.
<b>PLAN</b>	<b>Assessment Method(s)</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) A faculty developed rubric is used to score student performance. We assess thesis statements, quality of the idea, organization of the introduction, style/grammar, organization, reference quality, &amp; APA style for student papers in Research Methods (3302), and Experimental Psychology (4330)</li> <li>2) The Lamar Psychology Department uses the ACAT (<a href="http://www.collegeoutcomes.com/default.htm">http://www.collegeoutcomes.com/default.htm</a>) as a direct assessment of student learning. Students take the ACAT usually the semester in which they graduate—PACAT Inc. does the scoring and provides feedback data to the department. The ACAT includes subsections that measure knowledge of scientific methodology and statistical analysis; scores on these subtests are used to assess students' knowledge of methodology.</li> </ol>
	<b>Proficiency</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Proficient students should average the following scores across all rubric dimensions (thesis statement, quality of idea, organization of introduction, style/grammar, organization, reference quality, &amp; APA style):  PSYC 3302 papers should average at least 1.80  PSYC 4330 research proposals should average at least 2.40  PSYC 4330 final reports should average at least 2.80</li> <li>2) Proficient Lamar graduating psychology majors will average a 50<sup>th</sup> percentile rank on the ACAT Methodology subtests.</li> </ol>
<b>DO</b>	<b>Benchmark</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Students will average at least the following scores across all rubric dimensions (thesis statement, quality of idea, organization of introduction, style/grammar, organization, reference quality, &amp; APA style):  PSYC 3302 papers should average at least 2.10  PSYC 4330 research proposals should average at least 2.60  PSYC 4330 final reports should average 3.10</li> </ol>

		2) Lamar graduating psychology majors will average a 60th percentile rank on the ACAT Methodology subtests.
	<b>Results of Assessment</b>	<p>1) Students obtained the following average scores across all rubric dimensions:  PSYC 3302 papers = 2.81 (Benchmark met)  PSYC 4330 research proposals = 2.96 (Benchmark met)  PSYC 4330 final reports = 3.24 (Benchmark met)</p> <p>2) Lamar graduating psychology majors obtained the following percentile ranks on the ACAT subtests:  Experimental Design = 67  Statistics = 50  Overall Average across both subtests = 58.5 (Proficiency met) (Benchmark not met)</p>
<b>STUDY</b>	<b>Analysis of Results</b>	<p>1) Average scores across all rubric dimensions measures paper quality met benchmarks for Research Methods (PSYC 3302) papers, as well as Experimental Psychology (PSYC 4330) research proposals and final reports. All three of these benchmarks were increased from last year, thus the department is particularly happy with these results.</p> <p>2) Lamar graduating psychology majors exceeded the benchmark for performance on the Experimental Design ACAT subtest; however, they did not meet the benchmark for the Statistics subtest. The average of the two performance levels (58.5) fell slightly short of the benchmark (60).</p>

<b>ACT</b>	<b>Improvement Plan for 2024-2025</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1) All benchmarks for scores on the paper quality rubric dimensions were met; therefore, no plans for improvement are necessary. The same benchmarks will be used for an additional year before any consideration is given to possibly raising them.</li><li>2) The department is very pleased with the high level of performance our graduates achieved on the Experimental Design ACAT subtest. The lower performance on the Statistics subtest may be an artifact of the COVID pandemic, because many of the 2024 graduating class likely took Statistics at Lamar University during the COVID pandemic. It is well documented that the Pandemic depressed student performance in courses because all courses at Lamar University were remote at that time. For this reason, the department wishes to wait and see how students perform on the Statistics subtest next year before attempting to implement a plan for improvement. If current levels of lower performance were due to the Pandemic, performance should increase next year.</li></ol>
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