

MAJOR FIELD ASSESSMENT PLAN
M. A. PSYCHOLOGY
Fall 2010

The mission of Southeastern Louisiana University is to meet the education and cultural needs, primarily of Southeast Louisiana, to disseminate knowledge and to facilitate life-long learning through quality instruction, research and service in a safe, student-centered environment.

The purpose of offering graduate study in the Department of Psychology is to provide students with a M.A. level of knowledge and skills to either prepare the student for a Ph.D. program in Psychology and to provide students not intending to pursue a Ph.D. degree with a variety of courses that will help prepare them for paraprofessional positions. The program also offers an Industrial/ Organizational concentration for students interested in entering the business professions following graduation with their master's degree.

1. **Goal 1:** To train graduate students in practical research and critical thinking skills
 - a) **Assessment**
 - i) **Criterion:** A student will not be allowed to graduate with a M.A. in Psychology without at least acceptable competence in the research and critical thinking skills required to adequately critique and comprehend the research process and to complete an independent research project .
 - (1) **Procedure:** An understanding of research and the manner by which research is conducted is accomplished both by formal course work plus actual experience in research. All students are required to take Psyc 635 (Experimental Design and Analysis) and Psyc 636 (Nonexperimental Design and Analysis). These four-hour courses cover research design and statistics, and also require work on a project proposal as part of the course requirement. Students are required to earn a grade of at least a B in these courses in order to progress to thesis work and successfully complete the program. All students gain actual research experience when they are required to conduct a research project for their thesis work (Psyc 770). Further, the program encourages student participation in the ongoing research labs of faculty through taking independent research courses (Psyc 549) as an elective. A student's research skills and knowledge are certified by faculty committee evaluations of their performance on thesis oral proposal and defense examinations and on their comprehensive exams.
 - ii) **Criterion:** Alumni respondents will have positive ratings in terms of the questions relating to training in research and critical thinking skills.
 - (1) **Procedure:** All of the Alumni of our M.A. program will be surveyed using the questionnaire developed by Institutional Research at Southeastern. The questionnaire is entitled "A Survey of Graduate Degree Programs" and contains several questions rating satisfaction with the research training and critical

thinking training. Additional items have been added to specifically assess this criterion.

2. **Goal 2:** To provide students with a broad body of knowledge representative of the current state of knowledge in Psychology.

a) Assessment

- i) **Criterion:** A student will not be allowed to graduate with a M.A. in Psychology without a broad base of knowledge of Psychology.

(1) **Procedure:** Students do not specialize in an area in the Psychology M.A. program; rather they are required to take a broad base of core courses. Thus, whether students are going on to Ph.D. programs in applied areas such as Cognitive or Physiological, they have had a broad base on which to build. Student' general knowledge is certified by faculty committee evaluations of their performance on thesis and on comprehensive exams.

- ii) **Criterion:** Alumni respondents who enter Ph.D. programs will have positive ratings on questions relating to how well their M.A. training prepared them for further graduate work.

(1) **Procedure:** All of the Alumni of our M.A. program will be surveyed using the questionnaire developed by Institutional Research of Southeastern. The questionnaire is entitled "A Survey of Alumni of Graduate Degree Programs" and contains several questions rating satisfaction with the curriculum.

- iii) **Criterion:** Fifty percent of the students who apply to doctoral programs will be admitted to a doctoral program.

(1) **Procedure:** Psychology faculty and the Graduate Coordinator will follow up on all graduate students for whom they write letters of recommendation to graduate schools, and report the results to the Graduate Coordinator.

3. **Goal 3:** To provide students who do not immediately wish to pursue a Ph.D. with a variety of courses that will help prepare them for paraprofessional positions. Students who complete the Industrial Organizational concentration will be adequately prepared for careers within the business environment.

a) Assessment

- i) **Criterion:** Seventy five percent of the M.A. alumni who attempt to get jobs in Psychology related areas will be successful.

(1) **Procedure:** Major Professors will follow up on all of their graduate students receiving the M.A. and report the results to the Graduate Coordinator.

- ii) **Criterion:** Alumni respondents who obtain jobs will have positive ratings on questions relating to how well their M.A. training prepared them for those jobs.(a)

(1) **Procedure:** All of the Alumni of our M.A. program will be surveyed using the questionnaire developed by Institutional Research at Southeastern. The questionnaire is entitled "A Survey of Alumni of Graduate Degree Programs" and contains several questions rating satisfaction with how well the M.A. program trained them for jobs.

- iii) **Criterion:** Students who plan to obtain paraprofessional positions will include applied courses in their program.

(1) **Procedure:** Students are encouraged to do practicum work to gain practical

experience in their discipline. Students interested in clinical, counseling or school psychology are placed in settings such as the Comprehensive Counseling Center on campus or the Earl K. Long Pediatric Psychology unit in Baton Rouge and allowed to engage in assessment and counseling under the guidance of a licensed Psychologist. Students completing the Industrial/Organizational concentration are required to complete at least 3 -6 hours of practicum training. These students are placed in a number of business settings to gain practical experience under the supervision of Industrial/Organizational faculty. This is a chance for students to operate in a manner more relevant to their future professional life than would be the case in the typical classroom setting.