

MAJOR FIELD ASSESSMENT
M. A. PSYCHOLOGY
Spring 2008-Spring 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 that will prepare them for entry either into a Ph.D. program or a subprofessional position.

1. Goal 1

To train graduate students in practical research skills and critical thinking skills.

a. Assessment

(1) Criterion: A student will not be allowed to graduate with a M.A. in Psychology without at least acceptable competence in those skills listed in Working Goal 1.

(a) 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 design and statistics, and also require work on a research project as part of the course requirement. Students are required to earn a grade of at least a B in these courses. All students gain actual research experience when they are required to conduct a research project for their thesis work (Psyc 770). Some students gain additional research experiences by taking independent research (Psyc 549) as an elective. A student's research skills and knowledge are certified by faculty committee evaluations of their performance on thesis and on their comprehensive exams.

(2) Criterion: Alumni respondents will have positive ratings in terms of the questions relating to training in research and critical thinking skills.

(a) 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.

b. Results Obtained

(1) As can be seen in Appendix A, students performed solidly in the statistics/methods courses. Overall during the assessment period, 73% of the students passed the comprehensive exam in Psyc 635 (Experimental) and 83% of the students passed the comprehensive exam in Psyc 636 (Nonexperimental).

(2) 14 students successfully defended their theses during the assessment period.

(4) The most recent graduate alumni survey released by Institutional Research (2006-2007) indicates at least 75% of our graduates are either “Satisfied” or “Very Satisfied” with 20 of 29 dimensions surveyed. Of note, 75% of the respondents were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of the department and 100% were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of the degree program. Furthermore 75% were satisfied or very satisfied with the quality of instruction in advanced courses, effectiveness of faculty as teachers, and opportunity for meaningful interaction with faculty in research or other scholarly activity.

c. Changes in the Program

We have hired new graduate faculty in the area of Industrial/Organizational Psychology.

d. Planned Changes.

We hope to hire additional faculty members who will contribute the graduate program in psychology.

2. Goal 2

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

a. Assessment

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

(a) 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.

(2) 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.

- a) 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.
- (3) Criterion: Fifty percent of the students who apply to doctoral programs will be admitted to a doctoral program.
- (a) Procedure: Psychology faculty 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.

(b) Results Obtained

- (1) (a) As can be seen in Appendix A, students continued to do extremely well on their Southeastern comprehensive exams in the various content areas. The overall pass rate for all comprehensive exams was 89%.
- (1) As noted in response to Goal 1, the most recent alumni survey released by Institutional Research indicates that the majority of students are satisfied with all assessed dimensions of the program.
- (2) 12 current or former students applied to doctoral programs and 67% gained acceptance into a doctoral program after completing their M.A. at Southeastern. Thus, the goal of a 50% acceptance rate for those students applying to doctoral programs was exceeded.

a. Changes in Program

We have expanded our graduate program to include a track in Industrial/Organizational Psychology. We have also added a summer program to facilitate preparation of the thesis project, study for the GRE, and application to doctoral programs.

b. Planned Changes

We plan to strengthen our graduate program by hiring new faculty members who will be qualified to teach graduate courses and chair theses.

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 subprofessional positions.

Assessment

- (1) Criterion: Seventy five percent of the M.A. alumni who attempt to get jobs in Psychology will be successful.

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

(2) 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) 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.

(3) Criterion: Students who plan to obtain subprofessional positions will include applied courses in their program.

(a) Procedure: Students are allowed to take up to nine hours of practicum work. Students are placed in a setting such as the Comprehensive Counseling Center on campus or the Earl K Long Regional Medical Center in Baton Rouge and allowed to engage in assessment and counseling under the guidance of a licensed Psychologist. 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.

b. Results Obtained

(1) 100% of the graduates who attempted to find subprofessional positions were successful. Thus, the goal of a 75% success rate was achieved.

(b) The most recently released alumni survey indicates that 50% of our graduates are either "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" with the help they received from faculty regarding finding employment and 50% indicated being either "Satisfied" or "Very Satisfied" with "help received with regard to further educational opportunities."

(c) During assessment period, 10 students successfully completed practicum courses.

c. Changes in the Program

No changes have been made in this area of the program

d. Planned Changes

The department plans to provide more information regarding employment opportunities to students during advising.

Appendix A

Southeastern Comprehensive Exam Summary (F'05 to F'07)

<u>Date</u>	<u>Area</u>	<u># Taking</u>	<u># Passing</u>	<u>% Passing</u>
S'08	Nonexperimental (636)	13	12	92
S'08	Physiological (613)	13	12	92
F'08	Experimental (635)	6	6	100
F'08	Cognitive (612)	6	6	100
F'08	Social (614)	9	9	100
S'09	Nonexperimental (636)	8	7	88
S'09	Physiological (613)	8	8	100
F'09	Experimental (635)	9	5	56
F'09	Cognitive (612)	12	12	100
F'09	Social (614)	9	9	100
S'10	Nonexperimental (636)	8	5	63
S'10	Physiological (613)	10	8	80
Total		111	99	89