

**MAJOR FIELD ASSESSMENT PLAN**  
**M. A. PSYCHOLOGY**  
**Fall 2004**

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.

**Goal 1**

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

Expected Outcome

Students completing the M.A. program should demonstrate: i) a thorough knowledge of some area of research, ii) the ability to design, justify, and carry out a research project which has the potential for furthering the knowledge of this area, iii) the ability to report this research in a clear, professional manner.

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) and independent readings (Psyc 548) 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 SLU. The questionnaire is entitled "A Survey of Graduate Degree Programs" and contains several questions rating satisfaction with the research training and critical thinking training.

## Goal 2

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

### Expected Outcome

Students completing the M.A. program in Psychology will receive the core training in Psychology that would enable them to successfully enter a Ph.D. program as a third year graduate student.

### 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. Additional evidence comes from performance on the LSU consortium exams which require a broad, general knowledge of the major areas of Psychology (Note: only the subset of our students in the consortium program take the consortium 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 SLU. 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.

### Goal 3

To permit pursuit of a Ph.D. degree in Psychology in the “Louisiana Consortium of Graduate Training in Psychology.”

#### Expected Outcome

SLU will be an active member of the consortium program.

#### Assessment

- (1)Criterion: Each year at least one student will enter an LSU Ph.D. program through the consortium program. (Note: LSU limits the number of consortium students that they allow each year to 1 or 2).

- (a)Procedure: These figures are obtainable from LSU each year.

### Goal 4

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.

#### Expected Outcome

SLU will provide students with courses/experiences that will enable them to pursue careers in the field of psychology.

#### Assessment

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

(2)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 private practice of the Neuropsychological Center of Louisiana 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.