

**Assessment Report  
Applied Psychology Program  
2011-2012**

**I. Introduction**

History

The Department of Humanities and Social Sciences added the Bachelor of Science in Applied Psychology in 1997. The program has become well established and continues to grow and evolve. A minor in Psychology is also available to students. The Applied Psychology program serves students in the major, students in the minor, and serves General Education by providing courses that fulfill social science requirements.

Enrollment trends

Enrollment for the Applied Psychology major started very high, with 195 students enrolled in Fall of 2002. Between the 2002 and 2011 academic years, the Applied Psychology program has had a consistently stable number of students, totaling between 125 and 157 students actively enrolled each year. In Fall 2011 the Applied Psychology program had 137 students listing psychology as their primary major. This figure represents 14% of the students enrolled at OIT in the Fall 2011 term. Students in the program tend to be local; therefore it is not surprising that enrollment trends have dropped somewhat since the initial offering of the program. It should also be noted that many students transfer into the program as juniors or seniors, having completed the general education requirements within another major or at another college (e.g., KCC).

Graduation rates

The Applied Psychology program had 35 students graduate during the 2011-2012 academic year. Historically, the program has graduated between 42-56 students annually. This represents a small decline in the rate of graduation based upon the numbers of active enrollee.

**II. Program Purpose, Objectives, and Student Learning Outcomes**

Applied Psychology Program: Mission Statement

The mission of the Applied Psychology program is to enable students to apply general knowledge of psychology and in-depth knowledge and skill in specific areas of psychology to communicate effectively, think critically, behave ethically and with cultural awareness, and work interpersonally with people from a wide variety of backgrounds.

Applied Psychology Program: Objectives

1. To produce graduates with effective interpersonal skills that can work in a variety of practical settings
2. To enable students to obtain the knowledge and skills necessary for immediate employment and/or graduate study in psychology and related areas

3. To provide opportunities for students who wish to apply psychology training to employment in business and human service related organizations or to prepare for graduate programs in related areas
4. To serve as a minor to complement other programs on campus

**Applied Psychology Program: Outcomes**

NOTE: These Program Student Learning Outcomes are currently under review by program faculty and it has been decided to remove prior learning outcomes 1 and 3 due to vagueness. They will be reinstated as new outcomes with clearly delineated performance criteria that are more closely aligned with the American Psychological Association’s national guidelines for undergraduate psychology programs. New PSLO’s are marked in italics.

1. Students will demonstrate an understanding of and be able to use major research methodologies in psychology, including design, data analysis, and interpretation
2. Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant ethical issues including a general understanding of the APA Code of Ethics
3. Students will demonstrate basic counseling skills.
4. *Students will demonstrate effective writing conventions by using APA style effectively in empirically based reports, literature reviews and theoretical papers.*
5. *Students will demonstrate effective oral communication skills in various formats (e.g. group discussion, debate and lecture).*

**III. Three-year Cycle for Assessment of Program Learning Outcomes**

The learning outcomes will be assessed on a three-year cycle as demonstrated in Table 1.

<b>Program Learning Outcomes</b>	<b>2009 /10</b>	<b>2010 /11</b>	<b>2011 /12</b>	<b>2012 /13</b>	<b>2013 /14</b>	<b>2014 /15</b>
Students will be able to demonstrate an understanding of and be able to use major research methodologies in psychology, including design, data analysis, and interpretation.			X			X
Students will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant ethical issues including a general understanding of the APA Code of Ethics.	X			X		
Students will demonstrate basic counseling skills.		X			X	
Students will demonstrate effective writing conventions by using APA style effectively in empirically based reports, literature reviews and theoretical papers.				X		
Students will demonstrate effective oral communication skills in various formats (e.g. group discussion, debate and lecture).				X		

Table 1. Three-year cycle for assessment of Applied Psychology learning outcomes.

#### IV. Summary of 2011-2012 Assessment Activities

The Applied Psychology faculty met 9/27/11. We agreed that we will continue to focus assessment efforts in the courses that make up the core of the Applied Psychology curriculum, including the required Emphasis Electives. The free elective psychology courses will not be included in our program assessment. Our decision is based on the following – those courses typically have lower enrollment so the samples would be small and not necessarily representative of the outcomes of the program as a whole. We will include web sections of target classes. See Appendix A for Course by SLO matrix with 2010-11 target courses. (NOTE – this may change as we continue to revise the PSLOs)

1. *Program Outcome 1: Students will demonstrate an understanding of and be able to use major research methodologies in psychology, including design, data analysis, and interpretation*

##### Direct Assessment #1

We conducted assessments in PSY 313 (Fall and Spring terms) where students were able to learn and practice the principles of good research methodology. Measurement was through two direct means of assessment: 1) their final grade based upon a final comprehensive examination (fall term) and 2) their final written report scored with a rubric (Spring term). Data analysis will be measured in the spring term utilizing a written paper. Results are shown in Table 2.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement Scale	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Demonstrate understanding of Research Designs	MC exam questions	# of correct answers out of 40	70% at 28 or more correct	71% at 28 or more correct
Demonstrate understanding of Research Designs (Fall)	Essay format	# of correct points out of 20	70% at 14 or more	57% at 14 or more
Demonstrate understanding of Research Designs (Spring)	Research paper format	# of correct points out of 40	70% at 28 or more	89% at 28 or more

Table 2. Assessment results for SLO #1, fall 2011/spring 2012, PSY 313

##### Strengths and Weaknesses

Students in the PSY 313 class (Research Methods- Fall 2011) performed at acceptable levels on items assessing their understanding of fundamental principles of research design when provided a structured format for assessment. However, the data suggests a weakness in their ability to critically analyze the information about research methodology. This suggests that the students have acquired some basic understanding of Research Methodology but need to improve on their ability to critically analyze the

material in a conceptual manner. We will continue to assess their understanding of research methodology in the spring term utilizing a written report (with attached rubric) focused on the critical understanding of research methodology. Changes in the classroom assignments will incorporate more opportunities for analysis of published research within the classroom setting in order to improve their critical analysis of research methodology. During the spring term we will also assess their understanding of data analysis. The fall data suggests that the course material is sufficient for the basic understanding of research methodology.

The subsequent results from the Spring term analysis of student understanding of research methods through the utilization of a research report indicated that substantial changes had been made to the learning of research methods by students. This was accomplished through a significant change in the teaching methods and resources utilized in the classroom. The incorporation of a research paper instead of an essay format of testing was utilized to measure student learning and application of research methodology. This was a successful change in the demonstration of learning of this learning objective.

Indirect Assessment #1

We can assess this using the student IDEA summaries and a course related student survey conducted at the time of the final evaluation. Results are shown in Table 3.

Performance Criteria	Assessment Method	Measurement	Minimum Acceptable Performance	Results
Gaining factual knowledge	IDEA summary	5 point scale	3.5 on 5-point scale	5.0
Learning fundamental principles	IDEA summary	5 point scale	3.5 on 5-point scale	4.9
Learning how to use resources	IDEA summary	5 point scale	3.5 on 5-point scale	5.0
Learning how to analyze ideas	IDEA summary	5 point scale	3.5 on 5-point scale	4.8

Table 3. Results from the IDEA Center assessment, fall 2011, PSY 313

Strengths and Weaknesses

The essential factors of learning how to use resources was ranked by 92% of the students as being met. In measuring how well the students believed they gained factual knowledge and fundamental principles of research methodology a full 100% ranked the teacher and the course as meeting those objectives satisfactorily.

Strengths: Student performance exceeded acceptable performance levels on all criteria. The data indicate that students demonstrated a basic understanding of research methodology in psychology and the application of that knowledge in a research paper format.

Weaknesses: A weakness in the demonstration of their understanding of research methodology was noted in the fall term through the use of an essay format of testing. Instructional and resource changes were implemented and during the spring term there was significant evidence that students had developed a stronger understanding of research methodology, and could apply their understanding to the application of research methodology in the form of a research paper.

#### **V. Student Learning Improvement Plan**

Applied Psychology Program Student Learning Outcome 1: *Students will demonstrate an understanding of and be able to use major research methodologies in psychology, including design, data analysis, and interpretation.*

The results from the direct assessment indicate that students are demonstrating an understanding of major research methodologies in psychology and can apply their learning by performing the necessary requirements for a research paper. These papers indicated a proficiency in research design, and data analysis and interpretation at the undergraduate level of proficiency.

Results from the indirect assessment indicate that the students strongly agreed that the instructor and the course provided excellent opportunities for the learning of factual knowledge and principles of research methodology.

#### **VI. Changes to be considered by psychology faculty during this academic year**

In an attempt to provide useful information about the skills learned by the psychology students and to comply with the PSLO standards of assessment and the American Psychological Guidelines for Undergraduate Psychology Programs, the psychology faculty has continued the process of reviewing the PSLOs and modifying and adding needed learning outcomes. The Psychology faculty will be meeting following the end of the spring term to determine what changes need to be made in the curriculum so that the Psychology Program continues to meet the PSLO standards of assessment and the guidelines from the American Psychological Association.

In previous years the psychology program has incorporated the ISLO standards of assessment so that in addition to the previously stated learning outcomes (Learning outcomes 1-5), we have implemented procedures for measuring group work which will be included in the 2012-2013 academic year, lifelong learning which was part of the previous ISLO academic year assessment report (2010-2011).

The American Psychological Association has suggested that students also be assessed on professionalism and personal growth. The Psychology Program will also be implementing a means of measuring these factors in the learning objectives and this will be determined by the psychology faculty at the fall program meeting.

### **Appendix A**

Applied Psychology  
 Program Learning Outcomes x PSY Core Course/Emphasis Core Course Matrix for  
 2011/12 Assessment

**Program Learning Outcome**

Students will demonstrate an understanding of and be able to use major research methodologies in psychology, including design, data analysis, and interpretation

	1 <sup>st</sup> year	2 <sup>nd</sup> year	3 <sup>rd</sup> year	4 <sup>th</sup> year
Fall	PSY 201	PSY 215 PSY 220	PSY 301 <b>PSY 313</b> PSY 317 PSY 334 PSY 341 PSY 347 PSY 360 PSY 410	PSY 420  PSY 421 PSY 422 PSY 423
Winter	PSY 202	PSY 216	PSY 311 PSY 317 PSY 330 PSY 335 PSY 342 PSY 347 PSY 361 PSY 410	PSY 420 PSY 421 PSY 422 PSY 423
Spring	PSY 203	PSY 220	PSY 312 PSY 313 PSY 317 PSY 331 PSY 339 PSY 347 PSY 410 PSY 416	PSY 420 PSY 421 PSY 422 PSY 423 PSY 456 PSY 480