

**OUTCOMES ASSESSMENT REPORT
PSYCHOLOGY
2020-2021**

Psychology Undergraduate

B.A./B.S.

Program Mission:

The mission of the Department of Psychology is to contribute to meeting the educational and research needs in psychology; contribute to meeting the career needs in psychological services and research, as well as contribute to training for careers in education, engineering, physical and biological sciences, medicine, and other science fields; contribute to meeting the need for secondary school teacher certification in psychology; and to provide psychological and sociocultural service and expertise for the region, as well as the greater global community.

Student Learning Outcome 1:

Demonstrate critical thinking and an understanding of psychology as applied to everyday life.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 1

- Mastery of Content Knowledge and Skills
- Critical and Reflective Thinking Skills

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 1:

Grades from the applied papers assigned in Psychology 3400, Developmental Psychology, Psychology 3240, Abnormal Psychology, Psychology 3280, Theories of Personality and Psychology 4080 Drugs and Behavior will be used for this assessment. Successful completion of this objective will be demonstrated by 85% of students in those classes receiving a grade of C or better on these papers.

Summary of Data:

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	96	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	26
Total Number of Students Assessed:	122	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	78.7%

Second Means of Assessment for Outcome 1:

Psychology students will complete a survey in which one item will allow them to evaluate how well the psychology program teaches them to demonstrate critical thinking and an understanding of psychology as applied to everyday life. Successful completion of this outcome will be demonstrated by average survey scores of juniors and seniors that the outcome was successfully completed being 5 or higher on a 7-point scale.

Summary of Data: Of the 17 upperclassman taking the survey, the average score for teaching them critical thinking was 6.35, and the average score for applying psychology

to everyday life was 6.24.

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 1:

We are pleased that we have met our goal for the second means of assessment. Our upperclassmen strongly believe that they are getting the education they need for critical thinking and application of psychology to everyday life.

We found that we did not meet our goal for the first means of assessment across five courses taught by two different professors. These results could be due to COVID or online learning adjustments. As a department, we will discuss possible causes of this result and make adjustments as necessary.

Student Learning Outcome 2:

Be able to read, understand and critique psychological literature.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 2

- Mastery of Content Knowledge and Skills
- Effective Communication Skills
- Critical and Reflective Thinking Skills

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:

Grades from the paper and oral presentation in Psychology 3010, Psychological Research Methods will be used for this assessment. Successful completion of this objective will be demonstrated by 85% of students in the class receiving a grade of C or better on this paper.

Summary of the Data:

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	51	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	27
Total Number of Students Assessed:	78	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	65.4%

Second Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:

Grades from the final paper assigned in Psychology 4050, Positive Psychology and the lab presentation in Psychology 4110, Techniques in Physiological Psychology will be used for this assessment. Successful completion of this objective will be demonstrated by 85% of students in the classes receiving a grade of C or better on these assignments.

Summary of the Data:

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	54	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	3
Total Number of Students Assessed:	57	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	94.7%

Third Means of Assessment for Outcome 2:

Psychology students will complete a survey in which one item will allow them to evaluate how well the psychology program teaches them to be able to read, understand and critique psychological literature. Successful completion of this outcome will be demonstrated by average survey scores of juniors and seniors that the outcome was successfully completed being 5 or higher on a 7-point scale.

Summary of the Data: Of the 17 upper-classmen taking the survey, the average scores for reading, understanding, and critiquing ($M = 6.53$) was higher than 5, meeting the outcome.

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 2:

Our ability to educate undergraduate students on this SLO seems strong based on survey results from upperclassmen and in the second means of assessment.

It appears as if students struggled in the Methods coursework this past academic year potentially due to COVID and/or online learning. As a department, we will discuss possible causes of this result and make adjustments as necessary.

Student Learning Outcome 3:

Ability to design, analyze and interpret the results of an experiment, and to report the results in written form with the accurate use of APA format.

NMHU Traits Specifically Linked to Student Learning Outcome 3

- Mastery of Content Knowledge and Skills
- Effective Communication Skills
- Critical and Reflective Thinking Skills
- Effective Use of Technology

First Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:

Grades from the final paper assigned in Psychology 3020, Statistics for the Behavioral Sciences, and from the final projects from any students completing Psychology 4990, Independent Research will be used. Successful completion of this objective will be demonstrated by 85% of students in the class receiving a grade of C or better on these assignments.

Summary of the Data:

Number of Students Meeting Criterion:	18	Number of Students Not Meeting Criterion:	25
Total Number of Students Assessed:	43	Percent of Students Meeting Criterion:	41.8%

Second Means of Assessment for Outcome 3:

Psychology students will complete a survey in which one item will allow them to evaluate how well the psychology program teaches them to design, analyze and interpret the results of an experiment, and to report the results in written form with accurate use of APA format. Successful completion of this outcome will be

demonstrated by average survey scores of juniors and seniors that the outcome was successfully completed being 5 or higher on a 7-point scale.

Summary of the Data: Of the 17 upperclassman taking the survey, the average score for teaching them to design, analyze, and interpret results from an experiment was 5.71 and 6.00 in how to report the results for a study, meeting our department's goal.

Interpretation of Results for Outcome 3:

Again, the upperclassmen responded that they felt confident in their abilities to design, analyze, and interpret results from an experiment. However, the performance of students in their coursework for this SLO fell short. As a department, we will discuss possible causes (COVID, online learning) of this result and make adjustments as necessary.

Utilization of Results:

We are pleased with survey results from upperclassmen and will continue to use this method in the future. As a department, we will need to consider how online learning and the COVID-19 pandemic has affected our undergraduate majors as the results indicate that many of them struggled in coursework. Adapting to a digital platform may have been difficult for many of our students but we would like to have more data on whether the data from this academic year was an outlier or if it is indicative of a growing trend. Some courses suffered from an unusual amount of academic dishonesty which we also want to examine if this was specific to COVID/stress/mental health concerns.

Overall, the department does feel confident in our abilities to serve the NMHU undergraduate populations. In previous years, the undergraduate Outcomes Assessments have found that they met or nearly met our department's goals.

Changes to Program Based on Results:

Based on this data, the Psychology department will consider the following changes:

1. Consider implementing an Early Alert system specific to Psychology coursework in order to keep students from falling too far behind
2. Conduct separate outcomes assessment for face to face vs. online synchronous vs. online asynchronous coursework
3. Consider adding survey questions post-semester on student confidence and expectations for grades compared to their actual grades

Retention Strategies:

We think a critical piece to retention at Highlands is to make sure that students are being intensively advised. Toward that end, Psychology advisors contact all of our majors at Highlands University in the Fall to encourage them to come in for individual advising sessions. The department's Undergraduate Coordinator communicates with the majors frequently. We believe that this assists in retention and ultimately puts them

on a path to degree.