

Form E-1-A for Boston College Core Curriculum

Department/Program Psychology & Neuroscience

- **Have formal learning outcomes for the department's Core courses been developed? What are they?** (What specific sets of skills and knowledge does the department expect students completing its Core courses to have acquired?)

Learning Goal 1: Students will acquire a basic understanding of the topics studied and the methodologies used in the field of psychology.

- Learning Outcome 1a: Students will be able to demonstrate a general knowledge of theories, concepts, and findings in at least one subfield of psychology.
- Learning Outcome 1b: Students will understand better some of the different methodological approaches, paradigms, and technologies that have been used to study psychological processes.

Learning Goal 2: Students will gain critical thinking and writing skills and put them to use through the process of scientific inquiry.

- Learning Outcome 2a: Students will be able to consider competing hypotheses and to understand how data can adjudicate among those hypotheses.
- Learning Outcome 2b: Students will be able to evaluate critically contemporary data relating to psychology including media claims and graphical depictions of data.
- Learning outcome 2c: Students will be able to summarize psychological theory and research in concise accurate scientific writing.

Learning Goal 3: Students will acquire a better understanding of how psychological research methods are used to address perennial questions in psychology.

- Learning Outcome 3a: Students will be able to see how psychological study is complementary to other approaches to understanding and reflecting on the human condition.
- Learning Outcome 3b: Students will be able to express how the material learned is relevant to aspects of their daily lives, such as their behaviors and their interactions with others.

Learning Goal 4. Students will acquire skills to help them succeed in their personal and community lives after graduation.

- Learning Outcome 4a: Students will be able to demonstrate an appreciation of the ethical issues involved in human or animal research.
- Learning Outcome 4b: Students will be able to understand better themselves and others.

- **Where are these learning outcomes published? Be specific.** (Where are the department's expected learning outcomes for its Core courses accessible: on the web, in the catalog, or in your department handouts?)

The goals and outcomes are published on the department website and in appropriate handouts distributed by the department.

- **Other than GPA, what data/evidence is used to determine whether students have achieved the stated outcomes for the Core requirement?** (What evidence and analytical approaches do you use to assess which of the student learning outcomes have been achieved more or less well?)

An anonymous survey of students who take psychology core courses.

Direct evidence based on evaluation of samples of two kinds of student work:

Appropriate papers written by the students.

Appropriate essay questions on exams.

- **Who interprets the evidence? What is the process?** (Who in the department is responsible for interpreting the data and making recommendations for curriculum or assignment changes if appropriate? When does this occur?)

Each year the faculty meet to review the results, both qualitative and quantitative, of the analyses and to discuss changes that might be implemented to improve student learning. The faculty also discuss the strengths and weakness of the assessment procedures and consider potential changes in the procedures including the goals and the methods to evaluate them. In addition to the analyses of the department's core committee, suggestions for improvement in undergraduate teaching are solicited from course instructors and thesis advisers. Analyses also focus on the results of specific changes that had been implemented on the basis of earlier analyses.

- **What were the assessment results and what changes have been made as a result of using this data/evidence?** (What were the major assessment findings? Have there been any recent changes to your curriculum or program? How did the assessment data contribute to those changes?)

The results of the major survey were relatively positive. Modal responses on the 5-point scale for was a 5 for sixteen survey items, and a 4 for the remaining four likert scale items. However, we focused less on the survey results this year because: a) the number of respondents was substantially lower than in prior years, b) it was difficult to determine how the closing of campus and the transition to remote learning cause by the COVID-19 pandemic affected survey results, and c) the social unrest following the death of George Floyd focused our attention on issues related to Diversity and Inclusion. Our Department has responded to these recent event by the creation of Department-wide Diversity and Inclusivity Committee with four working groups. Two of the groups: Curriculum and Support, are working on concrete changes in our practices to

highlight issues related to diversity and social injustice. Specific examples include: 1) the addition of D&I statements on all course syllabi, 2) the targeted inclusion of more research by BIPOC scientists as well as discussions of diversity problems in the field, and 3) discussion of a potential program like the Gateway program in the Biology and Chemistry Departments that would assist first generation and underrepresented students majoring in Psychology and Neuroscience in transitioning to college. We will continue this discussion throughout the year, including an evaluation of a one-credit course offering from the fall of 2019 that may serve as a model for the potential new program. Finally, we plan to revise our annual Departmental major survey to assess the degree to which we are addressing D&I issues.

6) Date of the most recent program review. (Your latest comprehensive departmental self-study and external review.)

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