

Specific Goals and Learning Outcomes for the Undergraduate Psychology Major

The Department of Psychology at Kansas State University has adopted the learning outcomes for its majors by following those suggested by the American Psychological Association (APA). The APA has published a major document, *Undergraduate Psychology Major Learning Goals and Outcomes*, that details the goals and related learning outcomes for the undergraduate psychology major. The first five of the goals are relatively specific to the field of psychology and the latter five goals are consistent with a general liberal arts education.

It is the intention of the Psychology Department to provide our undergraduate majors with the opportunities to fulfill each of the following goals and outcomes through a variety of venues. Many of the outcomes listed are embedded in our courses but there are also opportunities outside of the classroom (e.g., field placements, independent studies, research experience, etc.) for all students. Our ultimate goal is to produce undergraduate majors who “can think as scientists about behavior and experience and have developed skills and values that reflect psychology as both a science and an applied field.”

The learning goals and outcomes for psychology majors are as follows (with a brief verbal description of each):

Theory and Content of Psychology. Demonstrate familiarity with major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology.

Research Methods in Psychology. Understand and apply basic research methods, including research design, data analysis, and interpretation.

Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology. Respect and use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and the scientific approach.

Application of Psychology. Understand and apply psychological principles to personal, social, and organizational issues.

Values in Psychology. Weigh evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and reflect other values underpinning psychology.

Information and Technological Literacy. Demonstrate information competence and the ability to use computers and other technology for many purposes.

Communication Skills. Communicate effectively in a variety of formats.

Sociocultural and International Awareness. Recognize, understand, and respect the complexity of sociocultural and international diversity.

Personal Development. Show insight into one’s own and others’ behavior and mental processes and apply effective strategies for self-management and self-improvement.

Career Planning and Development. Emerge from the major with realistic ideas about how to use psychological knowledge, skills, and values in various occupations and in graduate or professional school.