Experimental Psychology MA

G - Foundational Competence

Goal Description:

Students develop broad-based knowledge and competence in the scientific, theoretical, and conceptual foundations of general psychology.

Providing Department: Experimental Psychology MA

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

LO - Foundational Competence

Learning Objective Description:

Students demonstrate competency in the areas of experimental psychology through synthesis and integration of scientific, methodological, and theoretical foundations.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

ICF - Comprehensive Exams

Indicator Description:

Students demonstrate through a written comprehensive examination their knowledge of and ability to integrate the core areas of experimental psychology.

Criterion Description:

100% of students must pass comprehensive examination prior to graduation. Students are given a written exam of which they must complete the Statistics/Experimental Design question and complete 4 of 5 of the remaining questions which are all from foundational courses. Criteria for passing: the student must provide integrative responses that reveal an understanding of the information and experiences to which they have been exposed; they must provide complete references for all works cited using proper APA style; they must demonstrate their knowledge of the science in the field and support their answers, arguments, theories, logic, etc. with scientific research studies when applicable. Each question will be scored using a rubric by two faculty members who have expertise in the particular area. An average score of 9 or higher is needed to pass each question attempted, and students must pass all 5 questions. An example of the [revised 2020] comprehensive examination rubric is attached.

Attached Files

Revised MA Experimental Psyc Comps Rubric

Findings Description:

100% of students passed the comprehensive exams during the 2023-2024 academic year and passed all 5 of the questions.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

A - Comprehensive Exams

Action Description:

An announcement, a comprehensive exam training workshop, and the updated 2023-2024 Program Handbook introduced the 2022 and the 2023 incoming cohort to the new comprehensive exam requirements. 100% of the 2022 cohort who took comprehensive exams successfully passed. The 2023 cohort will be taking comprehensive exams during the spring of 2025 and will be encouraged to participate in the comprehensive exam training workshop. The 2024-2025 cohort will be informed of the comprehensive exam requirements as well as those

steps to help them be successful with announcements, during advising, during the PSYC 5331 (Graduate Seminar) course, during the comprehesive exam workshop, and via the 2024-2025 Program Handbook.

G - Research Competence

Goal Description:

Students develop increased competence in research methodology and statistical analyses.

Providing Department: Experimental Psychology MA

RELATED ITEMS/ELEMENTS

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 1

LO - Research Competence

Learning Objective Description:

Students demonstrate knowledge and skills related to competency in research methodology and statistical analyses.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 2

ICF - Research Competence

Indicator Description:

All students in the program will (a) take the PSYC 5388 (Advanced Experimental Design) and PSYC 5387 (Advanced Statistics) courses AND (b) pass the PSYC 5388 and PSYC 5387 courses AND (c) pass the Stats/Experimental Design question on the Comprehensive Exam.

Criterion Description:

Students demonstrate research competency when they (a) successfully complete the PSYC 5388 (Experimental Design) and the PSYC 5387 (Advanced Statistics) courses with a grade of B or better, AND (b) when they pass the written comprehensive exam question covering experimental design and statistics.

Attached Files

Manuscript Grading Rubric for PSYC 5388

Findings Description:

100% of students in the program demonstrated research competence by (a) successfully completing the PSYC 5388 (Experimental Design) and the PSYC 5387 (Advanced Statistics) courses with a grade of B or better during the 2023-2024 academic year, AND 100% of students taking the comprehensive exams during the 2023-224 academic year passed the comprehensive exam question covering experimental design and statistics.

RELATED ITEM LEVEL 3

A - Research Competence

Action Description:

An announcement and the updated 2023-2024 Program Handbook introduced the 2023 incoming cohort to the new research competency assessments. 100% of the 2023 cohort successfully met the first metric by passing PSYC 5388 (Experimental Design) and PSYC 5387 (Advanced Statistics) in their first year of the program. Further, 100% of the 2022 cohort has successfully met the second metric by passing the experimental design/statistics question on the comprehesive exams. The 2024-2025 cohort will be informed of the research competency assessments with an announcement, advising, during the PSYC 5331 course (Graduate Seminar), and via the 2024-2025 Program Handbook.

Update to Previous Cycle's Plan for Continuous Improvement Item

Previous Cycle's Plan For Continuous Improvement (Do Not Modify):

Closing Summary

In 2023-2024 AY, The MA Experimental Psychology program will focus on improvement to the comprehensive exam process. To that end, several revisions will be made to the process: (a) Time allotted for the exam will be increased from 24 hours to 72 hours, (b) The instructor of the graduate seminar, which is taken in the first semester of the program, will cover expectations for the comprehensive exams and provide guidance on how to prepare for the exam throughout their time in the program, (c) Faculty will create study sheets for each major domain/question to assist students in exam preparation, and (d) a new rubric will be developed for implementation in the coming year.

Although the program is removing research involvement in faculty labs as a criterion for research competence, the MA committee will initiate two additional changes to ensure research competence for all students: (a) students will be required to answer the previously optional Statistics/Experimental Design Comprehensive exam question as one of the five (out of six possibilities) questions they must answer, and (b) a second advanced Statistics course will be added to the required curriculum in the 2024-2025 catalog.

Update of Progress to the Previous Cycle's PCI:

The MA Experimental program focused on improvement of two main areas (1) improvement in the comprehensive exam process and (2) improvement in student research competence. The changes made to the comprehensive exam process (described above) were very successful and well accepted by students and the program. The success rate on the comprehensive exams was 100% for students in the 2023-2024 Academic Year. While required involvement in faculty labs was removed as one of the criterion for research competence during the 2023-2024 Academic Year, the program focused on performance in the Experimental Design and Statistics courses as well as performance on the Experimental Design/Statistics question on the comprehensive exam to evaluate research competency. Research competence was demonstrated by all graduating students in the program as all MA Experimental graduate students passed both the Experimental Design and Statistics courses and all 3 students who took comprehensive exams passed the Experimental Design/Statistics question. Further, the new Advanced Statistics II course will be offered in the 2024-2025 Academic Year.

New Plan for Continuous Improvement

Closing Summary:

Both major items (improvement in comprehensive exam performance and better assessment of research competence) that were a focus during the 2023-2024 Academic Year indicated that the changes made by the program were successful. As such, we plan to continue those changes that were made to improve comprehensive exam performance and to continue to assess research competence for the 2024-2025 Academic Year.

While not addressed during the 2023-2024 Academic Year, the program would like to explore possible avenues for better promoting the MA Experimental Psychology program in order to increase the size and quality of the applicant pool. Additionally, the program faculty would like to expore ways to recruit a more diverse pool of qualified applicants.