Online Assessment Tracking Database

Sam Houston State University (SHSU) 2014 - 2015

Psychology MA

Goal

Research Competence P

Students develop increased competence in research methodology and statistical analyses.

Objective (L)

Research Competency P

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

Indicator

Research Project P

Students' production of original research. This program is considered to be a research-oriented program. Therefore, all students in the program will either complete a research thesis or will have been engaged in a faculty member's program of original research along with having taken Psychology 5388, Advanced Experimental Design.

Criterion

Research Project & P

Students will demonstrate research competency when they either have completed a thesis or have enrolled in PSY 5388, Graduate Experimental Design. A common rubric will be used to rate the thesis; students will be required to reach a score of at least 80/100 to be considered thesis-complete. In the 5388 course, one of the requirements is to write three papers in APA format. The first two are intended to train the student in the proper format and written comments are supplied to the students to this end. The third paper is written in APA format and submitted for evaluation by the instructor and by an independent examiner using the attached rubric. The paper is scored with respect

to particular sections with a minimum score of 80 being the threshold for the designation "Acceptable." A copy of the rubric for this assignment is attached.

Finding

Research Project P

The entire program had a total of 8 students of which one was a first-year student. The first-year student was enrolled in Psychology 5388 and successfully passed the course. One issue is that the student did not meet the criterion on the APA-formatted papers but was able to make up for this weakness by doing well on other portions

of the course.

Action

Research Project P

The unsuccessful attempt to meet criterion on the APA-formatted papers is a problem and faculty currently are working with the student to increase his knowledge and appreciation of the APA style. At issue were seemingly careless errors and it has been impressed upon the student to take more time and effort in correcting those errors. This student has met with the instructor on various occasions during the academic semester and we have encouraged him to become more involved in faculty members' research programs in order to bring him up to an acceptable level of research competence.

Another issue that has again been raised is that the numbers in the MA-General program typically fluctuate from low to very low. Thus, the plan is to convert this MA-General program in to an MA program with an emphasis in Industrial/Organizational psychology and offer it at The Woodlands campus. The chair of the department currently is working on the paperwork to this end. One issue will be staffing the program but that problem will be overcome when the time arises. Until the transition occurs, though, the department is going to keep extended tracking of our MA-General graduates to assess the value of the program.

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Goal

Foundation Competence 🎤

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

Objective (L)

Foundational Competency P

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

Indicator

Comprehensive Exams P

Students demonstrate through a written comprehensive examination their ability to integrate the areas of general psychology.

Criterion

Pass Comprehensive Examination & P

of students must pass comprehensive examination prior to graduation. Students are given a written exam of which they must complete 5 of 7 questions listed. Criteria for passing are: 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 for each question by two faculty members who have expertise in the particular area. An example of the comprehensive examination and the question rubric is attached.

Finding

Comprehensive Examination P

During the past academic year a total of five individuals took the comprehensive examination. Four of the five successfully met criterion on their first try while the fifth failed in the fall and then passed in the spring. Thus, 100% of students taking the exam passed that portion of the program.

Action

Comprehensive Examination P

Four of the five students taking the comprehensive exam passed on the first time taking the exam and the fifth passed on the second time. In the upcoming academic year the coordinator for the program and the chair will meet with each student about to take the comprehensive exam to better assess if each student is at an acceptable level. Also, we will set up study groups prior to comprehensives so that the students can guage where he or she is with respect to the other students.

Previous Cycle's "Plan for Continuous Improvement"

- 1. Prior to comprehensive exams, students will be given instruction on what to expect and various strategies in handling the quesitons. This should enable them to better focus on, and better handle, the way they approach the exam.
- 2. During the course of the semester in which Psychology 5388, APA style and vigilance will be stressed on the research portion of the papers.
- 3. There is a concern about the numbers of students applying and being accepted into tis program; this year only one, an Hispanic male, was admitted. Dr. Crosby, when he speaks of the School Psychology program at Prairie View A&M University and Lamar University, will put in a pitch for our other MA programs as well.

The department will be hosting graduate school information programs for our undergraduate students who appear to qualify for entrance into our program.

Please detail the elements of your previous "Plan for Continuous Improvement" that were implemented. If elements were not implemented please explain why, along with any contextual challenges you may have faced that prevented their implementation.

- 1. Prior to comprehensive exams, students will be given instruction on what to expect and various strategies in handling the questions. This should enable them to better focus on, and better handle, the way they approach the exam--this appears to have worked as students did well on this year's comprehensive exam. We'll continue to work with our students to ensure success.
- 2. During the course of the semester in which Psychology 5388, APA style and vigilance will be stressed on the research portion of the papers--well, the lone MA General student did not do all that well on the APA-formatted research paper. This appears in part to be due to laziness as the student made what we consider to be dumb little mistakes, but they were mistakes just the same. With the incoming students, the chair will meet at the beginning of the academic year and stress the need for being meticulous in their studies and especially in their use of APA style.
- 3. There is a concern about the numbers of students applying and being accepted into this program; this year only one, an Hispanic male, was admitted. Dr. Crosby, when he speaks of the School Psychology program at Prairie View A&M University and Lamar University, will put in a pitch for our other MA programs as well—this year, we have two and perhaps a third choosing to enroll in our MA General program. This is better but the numbers are still too low for us to be happy. We will continue to host graduate school information programs for our undergraduate students who appear to qualify for entrance into our program and attempt to make them more aware of our program and will mention to our MA Clinical students who may be wait-listed for that program that the General program is available. Also, the chair will sit down with the new coordinator of the MA programs and the new coordinator of the School program and discuss ideas to make our programs more attractive.

Plan for Continuous Improvement - Please detail your plan for improvement that you have developed based on what you learned from your 2014 - 2015 Cycle Findings.

Incoming and second-year students will meet with the chair of the department at the beginning of the academic year. At that time, the chair will attempt to impress upon them:

- 1. the importance of successfully preparing for the comprehensive exams;
- 2. the importance of mastering APA style;
- 3. the importance of becoming involved in research;
- 4. With respect to numbers, we will continue to host graduate school information programs for our undergraduate students who appear to qualify for entrance into our program and attempt to make them more aware of our program and will mention to our MA Clinical students who may be wait-listed for that program that the General program is available. Also, the chair will sit down with the new coordinator of the MA programs and the new coordinator of the School program and discuss ideas to make our programs more attractive.