Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes
in the Graduate Program in Experimental Psychology

Students in the graduate program in experimental psychology will demonstrate several competencies during the course of their study. These targeted competencies are listed below as explicit student learning outcomes.

1. **Breadth of knowledge in experimental psychology**: Students will demonstrate familiarity with theories and empirical findings from various sub-disciplines within the field.

2. **Depth of knowledge in an area of experimental psychology**: Students will demonstrate expertise in a specific domain, as demonstrated by their integrated knowledge of theories and empirical findings in the domain.

3. **Research competence**: Students will demonstrate expertise as researchers, including:
   - a. Ability to formulate a research problem
   - b. Ability to design and execute studies appropriate to furthering understanding of research problems.
   - c. Ability to analyze and interpret data using statistical procedures appropriate to the research design and data.
   - d. Ability to write a research report in conventional format.

4. **Communication competence**: Students will demonstrate effectiveness at presenting and defending their ideas and their research in both spoken and written formats.

5. **Teaching competence**: Students will demonstrate competence at teaching.

**Indirect Assessment Measures**

1. Regarding student learning outcome 1, all students are required to take a minimum of three proseminars and a minimum of three elective courses. In addition, students must complete an “allied area” of study that may complement the focus of their research interests, but which must be distinct from those interests. Indirect assessment of breadth of knowledge is provided by completion of these requirements with a grade of “B” or better.

2. Regarding student learning outcome 2, all students are required to take elective courses and to complete a thesis and dissertation. In addition, they participate in regular research meetings with their mentor(s) and in their program area. Indirect assessment of depth of knowledge is provided by completion of elective course requirements with a grade of “B” or better.

3. Regarding student learning outcome 3, all students are expected to participate in regular research meetings conducted by their mentor(s) and by the program area, all students regularly enroll for research participation credit, and all students are strongly encouraged to pursue research projects beyond the minimum requirements for the PhD degree. Indirect assessment of research competence is provided by research presentations within the department, by conference presentations, and by publication in journals.
4. Regarding student learning outcome 4, all students are required to participate in research meetings in their labs and in their program areas, including giving oral presentations of their own research. Indirect assessments of communication competence include student presentations at professional conferences, effective teaching as demonstrated by good teaching evaluations, and publication of research.

5. Regarding student learning outcome 5, most students serve as a teaching assistant in a psychology course for a minimum of one semester. Students are encouraged to pursue additional opportunities to gain experience and develop teaching competencies by doing additional teaching and/or pursuing a teaching certificate at the University. The indirect assessment of teaching competence consists of satisfactory teaching evaluations by the students in the course.

**Direct Assessment Measures**

Direct assessments of student learning outcomes are obtained through completion of the attached checklist titled: “Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes in the Graduate Experimental Psychology Program.” This checklist will be completed by:

1. program area faculty as part of the year-end process of evaluating individual students (learning outcomes 1-5);

2. committee members as an artifact in evaluating the Master’s thesis defense (particular focus on learning outcomes 2-4);

3. committee members as an artifact in evaluating the qualifying exam defense (particular focus on learning outcomes 1-2);

4. committee members as an artifact in evaluating the Ph.D. defense (particular focus on learning outcomes 2-4).

These checklists will be submitted to the Director of Experimental Training (DET) as soon as they are completed; the DET will tabulate the results as a function of the students’ year in the program and learning outcome. The results will be submitted to the Chair of the Department, along with any recommendations concerning the graduate program in Experimental Psychology.

In addition, as a direct assessment of learning outcome 5, all graduate TAs are supervised by the course instructor and observed at least once during the semester by either the course instructor or another faculty mentor. Students in the Behavioral & Neural Studies Program who might not have an opportunity to TA are required to prepare and deliver at least 10 hours of lectures/classes in undergraduate courses. These students are closely supervised by the course instructor. Course instructors and/or faculty observers will complete the attached “Departmental Teacher Course Evaluation Form For TA Supervisors.” These evaluation forms will be submitted to the Director of Experimental Training as soon as they are completed; the DET will tabulate the results as a function of the students’ year in the program. The results will be submitted to the Chair of the Department, along with any recommendations concerning the graduate program in Experimental Psychology.

**Program-level Indicators**

Finally, the Department also has designated five program-level indicators of success that are related to the student-level learning outcomes:
1. The number of Ph.D.’s awarded (outcomes 1-4).
2. Placements of students in jobs, internships, and post doctoral positions (outcomes 1-5).
3. The number of National Research Service Award proposals submitted and number awarded (outcomes 3-4).
4. The number of conference presentations, and the number of publications by its graduate students (outcomes 3-4).
5. The number of students who leave the doctoral program before earning the Ph.D (outcomes 1-4).
**Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes in the Experimental Program**

The checklist below is intended as an organizational device for the year-end evaluation of each student in the graduate program in Experimental Psychology. Evaluations are to be made against expectations for students at a given year in the program. The same checklist should also be used in the process of evaluating Master’s theses and defenses, the written qualifying exams and oral defense, and dissertations and Ph.D. defenses.

What is the program area of the student?:  BNP  Cognitive  Developmental  Social

What is the year of the student in the program?  __________

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Outcome</th>
<th>Check if NOT applicable</th>
<th>Exceeds expectations</th>
<th>Meets expectations</th>
<th>Needs to improve</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Breadth of knowledge</td>
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<tr>
<td>Depth of knowledge in program area</td>
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<td>Research competence:</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Formulate research questions</td>
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<td>• Design &amp; execute study</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Statistics</td>
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<td>• Written research reports</td>
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<td>Presentation skills (speaking)</td>
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Evaluation of teaching, if applicable:

1. Nature of role in course:  TA  Instructor

2. Mean student rating of “overall teaching quality”:  ______

3. Faculty evaluation of performance:  ____ Exceeds expectations  
   ____ Meets expectations  
   ____ Needs to improve
DEPARTMENTAL TEACHER COURSE EVALUATION FORM FOR TA SUPERVISORS

TA Name ____________________  TA SS# ______________________
Supervisor (Course Instructor) __________________________________

Course Name/Number ______________________  Semester/Year _________________

1. Technical knowledge of the material:
   Excellent       Very Good       Good       Average       Poor       N/A

2. Performance during office hours and review sessions:
   Excellent       Very Good       Good       Average       Poor       N/A

3. Ability to grade homework and exam problems accurately and in a timely manner:
   Excellent       Very Good       Good       Average       Poor       N/A

4. Management of the course logistics, such as:
   - Preparation of solutions for homework and/or exam problems.
   - Photocopying the course materials.
   Excellent       Very Good       Good       Average       Poor       N/A

5. Availability to students:
   Excellent       Very Good       Good       Average       Poor       N/A

6. Ability to communicate student concerns to the instructor(s):
   Excellent       Very Good       Good       Average       Poor       N/A

7. Planning and supervising of laboratory experiments (for TAs in laboratory courses):
   Excellent       Very Good       Good       Average       Poor       N/A

8. Communication and personal skills when interacting with students:
   Excellent       Very Good       Good       Average       Poor       N/A

9. Overall TA performance:
   Excellent       Very Good       Good       Average       Poor       N/A

TA Signature __________________________

Supervisor Signature __________________________