

## Program-Level Assessment: Annual Report

Program Name (no acronyms): Psychology

Department: Psychology

Degree or Certificate Level: BA

College/School: Arts and Sciences

Date (Month/Year): September 2023

Assessment Contact: Lisa Willoughby

In what year was the data upon which this report is based collected? 2023

In what year was the program's assessment plan most recently reviewed/updated? 2022

Is this program accredited by an external program/disciplinary/specialized accrediting organization or subject to state/licensure requirements? No

If yes, please share how this affects the program's assessment process (e.g., number of learning outcomes assessed, mandated exams or other assessment methods, schedule or timing of assessment, etc.):

### 1. Student Learning Outcomes

Which of the program's student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle? (Please provide the complete list of the program's learning outcome statements and **bold** the SLOs assessed in this cycle.)

1. Students will demonstrate comprehension of the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, historical trends, and empirical findings in psychology in their application to complex problems.
2. Students will demonstrate their ability to discern the quality of research conducted by others and apply their research knowledge through an evidence-based psychology project.
3. Students will demonstrate their abilities to recognize ethically and socially responsible behaviors and engage in such behaviors through applied experiences and through an evidence-based psychology project.
4. Students will demonstrate competence in writing and in oral and interpersonal communication skills through an evidence-based psychology project.
5. **Students will demonstrate their ability to manage, present, and reflect on a major evidence-based psychology project.**

### 2. Assessment Methods: Artifacts of Student Learning

Which artifacts of student learning were used to determine if students achieved the outcome(s)? Please describe the artifacts in detail, identify the course(s) in which they were collected, and if they are from program majors/graduates and/or other students. Clarify if any such courses were offered a) online, b) at the Madrid campus, or c) at any other off-campus location.

- A1. Capstone project posters and presentations
- A2. PSY4969 (or 4965/4967)

- B1. Capstone impact essay rubric for personal/professional development reflections.
- B2. PSY4969 (or 4965/4967)

### 3. Assessment Methods: Evaluation Process

What process was used to evaluate the artifacts of student learning, and by whom? Please identify the tools(s) (e.g., a rubric) used in the process and **include them in/with this report document** (please do not just refer to the assessment plan).

1. Capstone judge ratings (which will be made by faculty and graduate student judges, typically during our Spring Capstone symposium) and capstone impact essay ratings on relevant rubric items made typically by

two faculty members will be summarized by department personnel. Due to personnel shortage, ratings from one faculty member were used. The Undergraduate program coordinator will summarize the data and share with faculty and relevant others to determine what the next steps will be.

2.A2. Capstone Judge ratings of 4 or better on items B1 & B2 will be considered success (acceptable or higher). Each poster was judged by 1 faculty member and 1 graduate student.

2.C2. Reviewer rubric items for capstone impact essays relevant to this outcome will be used. The rubric will follow the judges form where 4 or higher will represent indication of achievement of critical reflection of a capstone project.

#### 4. Data/Results

What were the results of the assessment of the learning outcome(s)? Please be specific. Does achievement differ by teaching modality (e.g., online vs. face-to-face) or on-ground location (e.g., STL campus, Madrid campus, other off-campus site)?

1. Between Fall 2022 and Spring 2023, we had 14 PSY4965 (capstone practicum), 7 PSY 4969 (critical thinking capstone), and 2 PSY4967 (independent research capstone) senior impact essays. PSY4969 reflected team-based work and the remaining students worked on individual capstone projects were working in collaboration with a faculty supervisor and, for the practicum students, their site. Two did not meet the minimum word count standards and thus 21 essays were considered.

Essay content were evaluated for (a) science, (b) social responsiveness, (c) personal/professional development, and (c) and other factors not captured in the other three categories. The latter category was used sparingly. Each component is worth a maximum of 4 points, for a total possible maximum of 16.

The average score across these capstones was 8.57 with scores ranging from 3 to 15. The relatively low scores reflect the conservative usage of the final category (other), which had an average rating of .6 out of 4 due to the high number of 0's. All other categories had similar average ratings (2.6 to 2.7), suggesting room for improvement in how they reflect on their work.

2. Capstone judge ratings for the following items were used. We had 19 poster ratings derive from our Spring Capstone symposium, with the following poster counts: 10 PSY4965 (capstone practicum), 8 PSY 4969 (critical thinking capstone), and 1 PSY4967 (independent research capstone) posters.

B1. Overall presentation style ratings (max = 7).

B2. Overall rating for the presentation content (max = 7).

The average score across all capstones was 6.3 for B1 and B2. Although all posters received a rating of 4 or higher, there is indication of room for improvement.

#### 5. Findings: Interpretations & Conclusions

What have you learned from these results? What does the data tell you? Address both a) learning gaps and possible curricular or pedagogical remedies, and b) strengths of curriculum and pedagogy.

The data suggest that our students are doing well with respect to presenting a complex psychology research project. The capstone course is instructor-intensive, and the results suggest that our instructional team is effective at engaging our students to be good critical thinkers and high-quality presenters.

Our capstone impact essay scores suggest that students may benefit from more clear assistance with making meaning out of their experiences.

6. **Closing the Loop: Dissemination and Use of Current Assessment Findings**

A. When and how did your program faculty share and discuss the results and findings from this cycle of assessment?

The contents of the capstone impact essay used is not faculty-involved, meaning that faculty are instructed to allow students to submit an essay “in their own voice” and that content editing should be avoided. There are ways the capstone impact essay reflective content can be improved and we will discuss this in our undergraduate program meeting during the Fall 2023 semester.

B. How specifically have you decided to use these findings to improve teaching and learning in your program? For example, perhaps you’ve initiated one or more of the following:

Changes to the Curriculum or Pedagogies

- Course content
- Teaching techniques
- Improvements in technology
- Prerequisites

- Course sequence
- New courses
- Deletion of courses
- Changes in frequency or scheduling of course offerings

Changes to the Assessment Plan

- Student learning outcomes
- Artifacts of student learning
- Evaluation process

- Evaluation tools (e.g., rubrics)
- Data collection methods
- Frequency of data collection

Please describe the actions you are taking as a result of these findings.

Action: Consider revising the capstone impact essay rubric to reduce the weight of the fourth “open/other” category.

Action: we will revise the capstone impact essay instructions to give students more clarity about the depth of reflection that would be considered appropriate. Additionally, all FTE instructors will be given the capstone impact essay and be encouraged to include assignments with reflective components that align with the essay components to increase the likelihood that our students exposure and practice with such reflective activities earlier than the capstone.

Action: Examine existing opportunities for students in psychology courses to engage in science communication through coursework by surveying FTE and adjunct instructors. Assignments used by faculty will serve as examples to other FTE faculty, adjunct instructors, and graduate student instructors.

If no changes are being made, please explain why.

7. **Closing the Loop: Review of Previous Assessment Findings and Changes**

A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years **as a result of previous assessment data**?

We are on a new assessment cycle with greater detailed examination of data than in year’s past.

B. How has the change/have these changes identified in 7A been assessed?

NA

C. What were the findings of the assessment?

NA

D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?

NA

**IMPORTANT: Please submit any assessment tools (e.g., artifact prompts, rubrics) with this report as separate attachments or copied and pasted/append into this Word document. Please do not just refer to the assessment plan; the report should serve as a stand-alone document. Thank you.**

## Guidelines for the Capstone Impact Essay



In architecture, a capstone is the crowning element of a structure; the finishing piece that binds everything together. In a similar way, the capstone project represents the culmination of your education as a student of Psychology. These projects can take on a number of different forms, but they are similar in their focus on capping off your education by putting psychology "into action."

The **Psychology Capstone Impact Essay** is a reflective writing assignment. The objective is for majors to grasp a bigger picture of how their capstone experiences and projects fit within and even contribute to the larger endeavors of psychological science and its applications. Students are challenged to consider new perspectives and insights that were revealed through their capstone experience and project. Through the transformative learning activity of reflection, students should work to "bind everything together" and thereby to deepen their understandings and convictions about the significance and value of psychology to themselves and for society.

The specific content of your essay will depend to some extent on the type of capstone course you completed. Most important is that your essay be persuasive and demonstrate insight, critical thinking, complex reasoning, and/or connections to SLU's mission. In particular, you are to consider the impact of your work and process as it relates to **psychological science, society, and your own personal development**. These themes are derived from the mission of the SLU Psychology Department. Your ability to *integrate* these three themes will be used to evaluate your essay.

**How will the essay be used?** Each year, three capstone projects are selected to represent the Psychology Department at the University-wide **Senior Legacy Symposium**. Selection for this high honor is based upon the Capstone Impact Essay in conjunction with abstracts describing the capstone project. Additionally, the Undergraduate Program annually recognizes one of these three projects with the **Capstone Impact Essay Award**.

## Eligibility

- All students participating in class sections of capstone courses [PSY 4960, 4967, 4965, & 4969] are expected to contribute to the completion of a Capstone Impact Essay, participate in the Psychology Capstone Symposium, and, if selected, participate in the Senior Legacy Symposium.

## Submission Guidelines

- A single essay per capstone project will need to be submitted for consideration as a representative for the Senior Legacy event. **In cases where multiple students work on a single project, then one collaborative essay should be submitted.** If a collaborative essay is selected for the Senior Legacy event, all authors will be invited to serve as ambassadors.
- Essays should be submitted electronically through the Capstone Submission form by the deadline ensure consideration for the Senior Legacy.
- All essay submissions must include the following required components:
  - Project title
  - Capstone course name and course number
  - Capstone course instructor's name
  - Author name(s)
  - Essay that is **500-600 words** in length. The word limit does not include the elements listed above (title, capstone course information, author names, and references). **Essays under 500 words and over 600 words will be immediately disqualified for consideration as a Senior Legacy submission.** The content should address the components on the next page.

## Essay Content

All Capstone Impact essays will be evaluated based on the quality of submissions on each of the following areas below. Reflect on how your overall capstone experience is related to the science, society, and your personal development. Thought prompts are provided to offer guidance and *students are not expected to respond to each of the prompts below*. Rather, use these prompts to focus your thinking on the broader impacts and implications of your work in each of the three areas, while concentrating on the significance most directly relevant to your work.

### **1. Science**

Reflect on how your capstone experience is related to the existing literature in psychological science.

Thought prompts:

- In way ways does your project contribute or relate to the existing body of psychological science?
- What are the scientific roots, applications, or implications of your project?
- What knowledge gaps does your project address or uncover that psychologists might investigate?

### **2. Social Responsibility**

Reflect on how ethically and socially responsible behaviors have been recognized during your capstone experience.

Thought Prompts:

- How did you engage with your project to represent ethically and socially responsible behaviors?
- How might the results of your project or the process through which you completed it help to promote human welfare in local, national, and/or global communities?
- In what ways does your capstone address the needs of diverse communities and/or promote inclusivity?

### **3. Personal and Professional Development**

Reflect on how your capstone experiences impacted your personal and professional development.

Thought Prompts:

- You might consider specifying how your ability to manage or present your capstone project and collaborative experiences (e.g., with other students, faculty supervisor, etc.) impacted your:
  - Knowledge and skills
  - Capacities for civic and leadership roles
  - Values, beliefs or convictions
  - Career or life aspirations

Evaluation Rubric (NOTE: INTERNAL USE ONLY - FINAL RESULTS WILL NOT BE SHARED WITH STUDENTS)

COMPONENT	Does not meet or very minimally meets standards	Adequately meets standards	Meets standards very well	Points/Notes
Required Components	Does not meet word limit standard (DISQUALIFIED – not eligible for award)			
Science	Responses to stated prompt missing or not clearly presented (0 points)	Responses to stated prompt exist but with moderate issues in presentation (1-2 points)	Responses to stated prompt exist and presented with few to no issues (3-4 points)	
Social Responsibility	Responses to stated prompt missing or not clearly presented (0 points)	Responses to stated prompt exist but with moderate issues in presentation (1-2 points)	Responses to stated prompt exist and presented with few to no issues (3-4 points)	
Personal/Professional Development	Responses to stated prompt missing or not clearly presented (0 points)	Responses to stated prompt exist but with moderate issues in presentation (1-2 points)	Responses to stated prompt exist and presented with few to no issues (3-4 points)	
Other quality points not captured elsewhere	0 points	1-2 points	3-4 points	

Total possible: 16



**Spring 2020 Psychology Capstone Symposium**  
**Project Ratings Form: Critical Thinking Capstone Projects**

Poster Number \_\_\_\_\_

Judge Number \_\_\_\_\_

RATING SCALE	
1	Extremely poorly executed (completely misses minimum standards)
2	Poorly executed (mostly misses minimum standards)
3	Somewhat poorly executed (somewhat misses minimum standards)
4	Acceptably executed (barely meets minimum standards)
5	Well-executed (somewhat exceeds minimum standards)
6	Very well-executed (mostly exceeds minimum standards)
7	Superior execution (far exceeds minimum standards)

**PHYSICAL POSTER RATINGS**

A1. POSTER: Visual Format (40%)								
<b>A1a</b>	<b>Text readability</b> <i>Quality of text readability from about 6 feet away</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>A1b</b>	<b>Effectiveness of the layout</b> <i>Flow of the layout</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>A1d</b>	<b>Appropriateness of images, tables, and figures</b> <i>Images, tables, and figures effectively support content</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>A1*</b>	<b>Overall rating for the poster physical appearance</b> <i>Overall visual and aesthetic qualities</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

A2. POSTER: Content (60%)								
<b>A2a</b>	<b>Quality of information related to real-world event</b> <i>Clear presentation with relevant details</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>A2b</b>	<b>Critical presentation of empirical literature</b> <i>Empirical literature presents multiple perspectives</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>A2c</b>	<b>Connection between psychological theory and/or concepts to action plan</b> <i>Psychological research/concepts clearly presented</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>A2d</b>	<b>Presentation of interviews</b> <i>Interviews appropriately incorporated into project</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>A2e</b>	<b>Action plan quality</b> <i>Action plan logically follows the evidence</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>A2*</b>	<b>Overall rating for the poster content</b> <i>Overall quality of the information presented</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### RATING SCALE

1	Extremely poorly executed (completely misses minimum standards)
2	Poorly executed (mostly misses minimum standards)
3	Somewhat poorly executed (somewhat misses minimum standards)
4	Acceptably executed (barely meets minimum standards)
5	Well-executed (somewhat exceeds minimum standards)
6	Very well-executed (mostly exceeds minimum standards)
7	Superior execution (far exceeds minimum standards)

### ORAL PRESENTATION RATINGS

B1. ORAL PRESENTATION: Presentation Style (40%)								
<b>B1a</b>	<b>Length of presentation</b> <i>Timing appropriate</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>B1b</b>	<b>Speaking skills and composure</b> <i>Information presented with clarity (preparation evident)</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>B1*</b>	<b>Overall presentation style ratings.</b> <i>Overall quality rating of the oral presentation</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B2. ORAL PRESENTATION: Content (60%)								
<b>B2a</b>	<b>Depth of details</b> <i>Clear presentation with relevant details</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>B2b</b>	<b>Accuracy of information presented</b> <i>Information correctly represented by speaker</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>B2*</b>	<b>Overall rating for the presentation content</b> <i>Overall quality of the information presented</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### OVERALL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

<b>C1</b>	<b>Overall ratings of familiarity with major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, historical trends, and/or applications in psychology.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>C2</b>	<b>Overall ratings of critical synthesis of the literature, critical thinking, and/or problem solving.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>C3</b>	<b>Overall ratings of demonstration of understanding, awareness, and respect for human diversity and dignity.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>C4</b>	<b>Overall, how well did students demonstrate their ability to apply psychological concepts, principles, and skills to their capstone project?</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Spring 2020 Psychology Capstone Symposium**  
**Project Ratings Form: Practicum Capstone Projects**

Poster Number \_\_\_\_\_

Judge Number \_\_\_\_\_

RATING SCALE	
1	Extremely poorly executed (completely misses minimum standards)
2	Poorly executed (mostly misses minimum standards)
3	Somewhat poorly executed (somewhat misses minimum standards)
4	Acceptably executed (barely meets minimum standards)
5	Well-executed (somewhat exceeds minimum standards)
6	Very well-executed (mostly exceeds minimum standards)
7	Superior execution (far exceeds minimum standards)

**PHYSICAL POSTER RATINGS**

A1. POSTER: Visual Format (40%)		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>A1a</b>	<b>Text readability</b> <i>Quality of text readability from about 6 feet away</i>							
<b>A1b</b>	<b>Effectiveness of the layout</b> <i>Flow of the layout</i>							
<b>A1d</b>	<b>Appropriateness of images, tables, and figures</b> <i>Images, tables, and figures effectively support content</i>							
<b>A1*</b>	<b>Overall rating for the poster physical appearance</b> <i>Overall visual and aesthetic qualities</i>							

A2. POSTER: Content (60%)		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>A2a</b>	<b>Quality of information related to practicum experience</b> <i>Clear presentation with relevant details</i>							
<b>A2b</b>	<b>Quality of psychological science presented</b> <i>Clear presentation with appropriate references</i>							
<b>A2c</b>	<b>Critical evaluation of the literature and/or practice</b> <i>Evidence of critical thinking present in presentation</i>							
<b>A2d</b>	<b>Connection between psychological theory and/or concepts to practicum experience</b> <i>Associations between psychology and experience are clear</i>							
<b>A2e</b>	<b>Quality of conclusion or final evaluation</b> <i>Assertions/conclusions logically follow information presented</i>							
<b>A2*</b>	<b>Overall rating for the poster content</b> <i>Overall quality of the information presented</i>							

### RATING SCALE

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<b>B1*</b>	<b>Overall presentation style ratings.</b> <i>Overall quality rating of the oral presentation</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

B2. ORAL PRESENTATION: Content (60%)								
<b>B2a</b>	<b>Depth of details</b> <i>Clear presentation with relevant details</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>B2b</b>	<b>Accuracy of information presented</b> <i>Information correctly represented by speaker</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>B2*</b>	<b>Overall rating for the presentation content</b> <i>Overall quality of the information presented</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

### OVERALL STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

<b>C1</b>	<b>Overall ratings of familiarity with major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, historical trends, and/or applications in psychology.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>C2</b>	<b>Overall ratings of critical synthesis of the literature, critical thinking, and/or problem solving.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>C3</b>	<b>Overall ratings of demonstration of understanding, awareness, and respect for human diversity and dignity.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>C4</b>	<b>Overall, how well did students demonstrate their ability to apply psychological concepts, principles, and skills to their capstone project?</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Spring 2020 Psychology Capstone Symposium**  
**Project Ratings Form: Research Capstone Projects**

Poster Number \_\_\_\_\_

Judge Number \_\_\_\_\_

RATING SCALE	
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3	Somewhat poorly executed (somewhat misses minimum standards)
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<b>A1b</b>	<b>Effectiveness of the layout</b> <i>Flow of the layout</i>							
<b>A1d</b>	<b>Appropriateness of images, tables, and figures</b> <i>Images, tables, and figures effectively support content</i>							
<b>A1*</b>	<b>Overall rating for the poster physical appearance</b> <i>Overall visual and aesthetic qualities</i>							

A2. POSTER: Content (60%)		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>A2a</b>	<b>Quality of background and rationale</b> <i>Clear with past works appropriately incorporated</i>							
<b>A2b</b>	<b>Presentation of research hypotheses</b> <i>Overall ratings of demonstration of understanding, awareness, and respect for human diversity and dignity.</i>							
<b>A2c</b>	<b>Compatibility of study design to hypothesis</b> <i>Study design optimally addresses hypothesis</i>							
<b>A2d</b>	<b>Quality of the data analysis and interpretation</b> <i>Analytic methods appropriate for addressing hypotheses</i>							
<b>A2e</b>	<b>Conclusions</b> <i>Conclusion(s) reasonably follows the analyses</i>							
<b>A2*</b>	<b>Overall rating for the poster content</b> <i>Overall quality of the information presented</i>							

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<b>C2</b>	<b>Overall ratings of critical synthesis of the literature, critical thinking, and/or problem solving.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>C3</b>	<b>Overall ratings of demonstration of understanding, awareness, and respect for human diversity and dignity.</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
<b>C4</b>	<b>Overall, how well did students demonstrate their ability to apply psychological concepts, principles, and skills to their capstone project?</b>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7