Psychology
Program-specific competencies

Competencies are the skills, knowledge and attributes gained through every work, educational, volunteer and life experience. UVic students in the Psychology program develop the following program-specific competencies.

Knowledge base of psychology

Demonstrates familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in psychology

- Characterizes the nature of psychology as a discipline
- Demonstrates knowledge and understanding representing appropriate breadth and depth in selected content areas of psychology
- Uses the concepts, language, and major theories of the discipline to account for psychological phenomena
- Explains major perspectives of psychology (social/environmental biological/neuropsychology, learning/cognition/perception, developmental, personality/abnormal)

Research methods in psychology

Understands and applies basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis, and interpretation

- Describes the basic characteristics of the science of psychology
- Explains different research methods use by psychologists
- Designs and conducts basic studies to address psychological questions using appropriate research methods
- Follows the APA Code of Ethics in the treatment of human and nonhuman participants in the design, data collection, interpretation, and reporting of psychological research

Biology/neuropsychology

Understands the biological and neurological basis of behavior through the study of human and animal anatomy and physiology

- Uses knowledge of neurological, experimental and clinical psychology to understand normal cognitive and affective functioning
- Learns the physiological basis of behavior as expressed in areas such as sleep, reproduction, aggression and mental disorders
- Understands the physiological correlates of behavior
- Gains knowledge of the basic principles of drugs, behavior and the central nervous system
- Studies brain dysfunction following brain damage using both classical and contemporary readings as well as methods of testing and diagnosis
- Applies knowledge of biological psychology to develop and deliver oral presentations in seminar format
Learning, cognition and perception

Understands how classical and contemporary concepts and research relate to cognition and learning through the study of cognitive and sensory processes

- Learns the environmental determinants affecting the acquisition, maintenance and modification of behavior
- Learns the approach to studying cognitive processes
- Uses mathematical and statistical methods to measure sensory experience
- Uses aspects of hypothesis testing to understand the construction of our perceptual world
- Uses critical inquiry to analyze selected issues such as memory, consciousness, vision and cognitive control

Social/environmental

Understands the concepts, theories and research regarding the nature of human-human and human-environmental interaction

- Learns and applies basic knowledge of group and individual interaction through studying social motivation, perception, attitude development and change
- Understands the role of attitudes, values, culture and ethnicity in consumer behavior
- Understands the processes of organizational psychology through the study of motivation, selection, training, leadership, management and organizational development
- Uses primary sources to study verbal and non verbal communication, interpersonal systems and systemic approaches to psychopathology
- Learns the psychological and biological bases of language
- Studies and understands the contribution of psychological research towards crime investigation and the legal system

Developmental

Understands the concepts, theories and research regarding human development across the life-span

- Demonstrates knowledge of evolutionary perspectives on psychological topics such as learning, cognition, consciousness, families and culture
- Studies psychological processes from conception through to age 12, adolescence, and adulthood
- Learns the theories and methods appropriate for study of human psychological development across the life span
- Completes intensive examination of specific processes in infants, children, adolescents and adults

Values in psychology

Values empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and reflect other values that are the underpinnings of psychology as a science

- Recognizes the necessity for ethical behavior in all aspects of the science and practice of psychology
- Demonstrates reasonable skepticism and intellectual curiosity by asking questions about causes of behavior
- Tolerates ambiguity and realizes that psychological explanations are often complex and tentative
- Understands the limitations of own psychological knowledge and skills

University of Victoria
Co-operative Education
Program and Career Services
Personal/abnormal psychology

Understands the concepts, theories and research regarding personality, psychological disorders, and psychological therapies

- Learns major strategies followed in conceptualizing and measuring personality
- Studies the interaction of biological, psychological and social factors in human health
- Learns and applies basic behavioral modification techniques and appreciates the potential problems involved
- Accesses biological, learning, developmental, humanistic and cross-cultural perspectives to understand psychological disorders of adulthood
- Sources and completes a field placement providing first-hand experience with individuals challenged by physical, cognitive, emotional and/or psychological disorders
- Studies the historical development of clinical psychology including practitioner training, current research and ethical issues
- Studies the etiology, description and treatment of disorders occurring in childhood and adolescence
- Evaluates recent research in applied behavior analysis
- Surveys learning and developmental disabilities with emphasis on the education of children with developmental handicaps

UVic Co-op and Career worked with the Department of Psychology to develop this competency document.