

# PROGRAM-SPECIFIC COMPETENCIES - PSYCHOLOGY

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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. We worked with the Department of Psychology to develop this document.

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## 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

## 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