NECHE Inventory of Educational Effectiveness Indicators
Undergraduate Programs
(Psychology, AY 22-23)

Degree Granting Program Name	(1) List ONLY the program learning objective(s) assessed during the current reporting period	(2) For each learning objective listed in column (1), other than GPA, what data/ evidence was used to determine that graduates have achieved the stated objectives? (e.g., capstone assignment, portfolio review, licensure examination)	(3) What were the results/outcomes/findings/conclusion(s) of the assessment? Explain results/findings/conclusions for each program learning objective listed in column (1)	(4) Who interprets the evidence? Describe the process (e.g. annually by the curriculum committee).	(5) What changes/improvements have been made as a result of using the data/evidence (3)? Link discussion in this column with a learning objective (1) and the results of assessing that objective (3)	(6) Date of most recent program review
Psychology	PLO 1: Students will demonstrate their acquisition of knowledge about the science of psychology in each of the following domains.	We administered the ACAT, a standardized, nationally normed exam. In this administration of the ACAT exam we used a version of the exam with the following subscales: • Experimental design • Statistics • Clinical/Counseling • Developmental • Human Learning/Cognition • Social	The pattern of results suggests that at or near the point of being graduated our students' ability to demonstrate their knowledge of select subdomains of psychology is consistently below the ACAT national norms.	The Assessment Committee interprets the initial findings of the assessment. The Chair of the Assessment Committee also reports out the results to the remainder of the department faculty during a department meeting and/or end of the semester retreat.	No changes or improvements have been made yet. The data will be discussed during the present academic year (AY2023-24) with department faculty; with recommendations being made by the end of the spring semester.	First review scheduled AY 20-21

If you have any questions or concerns about the form, please contact Jena Shepard at jshepard1@framingham.edu or 508-215-5884.

Program Assessment

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Please select the reporting period this assessment/accreditation work was completed:

*2022-2023 ▾

Please select the type of program you completed assessment/accreditation work for this reporting period:
Note: If changing your initial selection, please refresh this page prior to making a new selection.

*Undergraduate Program ▾

Please select the program you completed assessment for during this reporting period:

*Psychology ▾

Please select the option that best describes the assessment work completed during this reporting period.

* ◉ Only assessed program learning objective(s)
  ○ Only completed other assessment activities (ex. assessment plan, rubrics etc.)
  ○ Assessed program learning objective(s) and completed other assessment activities (ex. assessment plan, rubrics etc.)
  ○ Did not undertake program assessment work

Program Learning Objectives Assessed

List the first program learning objective assessed during this reporting period:

LO1: Students will demonstrate their acquisition of knowledge about the science of psychology in each of the following domains:

For the first program learning objective assessed, other than GPA, what data/evidence was used to assess student learning? (e.g. capstone assignment, portfolio review, licensure examination)

To assess LO1, and as we have in past years [2018, 2019] we administered the ACAT, a standardized, nationally normed exam. In this administration of the ACAT we used a version of the exam with the following subscales: Experimental design, Statistics, Clinical/Counseling, Developmental, Human Learning/Cognition, and Social.

For the first program learning objective assessed what were the results/outcomes/findings/conclusion(s)?

The pattern of results suggests that at or near the point of being graduated our students' ability to demonstrate their knowledge of select subdomains of psychology is consistently below the ACAT national norms.

Attach any additional documents (data or survey summaries, charts, graphs etc.) that support your results/findings/conclusions (optional):

PSYC Assessment Report 2022-2023 LO1.docx

For the first program learning objective assessed what changes/improvements have been made as a result of using the data/evidence?

No changes or improvements have been made yet. The data will be discussed during the present academic year (AY2023-24) with department faculty; with recommendations being made by the end of the spring semester.

Did you assess any additional program learning objectives during this reporting period?

*○ Yes
◉ No

Who interprets the results/findings of the assessment? Describe the process (e.g. annually by the curriculum committee).

The Assessment Committee interprets the initial findings of the assessment. The Chair of the Assessment Committee also reports out the results to the remainder of the department faculty during a department meeting and/or end of the semester retreat.

Program Information

Enter the year of the most recent program review. If the program is new, enter the upcoming program review year or enter TBD (to be determined).

*2023-2024

Insert the URL of the web page where Program Learning Objectives for this program are published:
NECHE requires this as part of being transparent to stakeholders.

*https://www.framingham.edu/academics/colleges/social-and-behavioral-sciences/psychology-and-philosophy/

Signatures

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Nicole Rossi
Submitter Signature

11/26/2023
Date

Office of Institutional Assessment

Office of Institutional Assessment Only

Institutional Assessment Signature

Date

2022-2023 Departmental Assessment Report

Prepared by Charles Sachs, PhD

May 2023

I. Overview

During the 2022-2023AY the Psychology & Philosophy Department's Assessment Committee (DPAC) consisted of (in alphabetical order by last name): Drs. Joseph D'Andrea, Michael Greenstein, Cynthia Prehar, Nicole Rossi (Department Chair), and Charles Sachs (DPAC Chair). The committee assessed the first learning objective in the current department assessment cycle: Learning Objective [LO] 1: The student will demonstrate their acquisition of knowledge about the science of psychology in each of the following domains: research methodology, biopsychology, learning and cognition, developmental psychology, sociocultural psychology, and clinical psychology. To assess LO1, and as we have in past years [2018, 2019] we administered the ACAT, a standardized, nationally normed exam. In this administration of the ACAT we used a version of the exam with the following subscales: Experimental design, Statistics, Clinical/Counseling, Developmental, Human Learning/Cognition, and Social. Results are reported below. Given that a new applied statistics course (STAA 127 Statistics for Social Sciences) and Clinical/Counseling Domain (including PSYC 217 Introduction to Counseling & PSYC 222 Psychopathology) were added to the psychology major curriculum effective AY2022-23, subscales in those areas were added to the spring 2023 administration.

II. ACAT Administration, spring semester 2023

To make this a 'summative assessment', the exam was administered only in capstone courses. The capstone courses that were offered in the spring 2023 semester were: Empirical Thesis [PSYC 450]; History and Systems of Psychology [PSYC 460]; Internship in Psychology [PSYC 495] and Seminar in Psychology [PSYC 480]. Total enrollment in each of these courses was 59 students. There were 10 students taking two capstone courses resulting in a total student pool of 49 students. Of these 49-total number of capstone students in the spring 2023 term, 40 students completed the ACAT.

During the week of April 10, 2023, the DPAC chair visited each of the four capstone sections to introduce students to the ACAT, and to explain that the exam would be administered in their class the following week [i.e., week of 4/17/2023]. Another purpose of the visit to capstone classes was to seek students' best effort on the exam. The ACAT was then administered the week of 4/17/2023 during a regular class meeting of each capstone course. Each instructor administered the ACAT to their own capstone students using standardized procedures and instructions provided by ACAT.

III. ACAT Results

Standardized ACAT scores range from 200 to 800, with a mean score of 500 and a standard deviation of 100. Scores for each narrow content area (e.g. Human Learning/Cognition) are relative to a reference group for the same content area. The **overall** score is relative to a reference group from the discipline of psychology and is **no**t a mean of the content scores. The national reference sample includes all subject area individuals who completed the psychology ACAT during AY 2016-17 through AY 2021-2022, with the exception of the cohort who completed the psychology ACAT in the spring of 2020. According to ACAT, that cohort was excluded from their reference group because of widespread disruptions caused by the onset of COVID. In sum, the reference group against which our students' AY 2022-23 ACAT scores were evaluated consisted of approximately 65% pre-COVID cohorts/scores.

Area	2023 Standard Score	%ile	n	2019 Standard Score	%ile	n	2018 Standard Score	%ile	n
Clinical/Counseling	412	19		----	----		----	----	
Developmental	449	31		457	33		438	27	
Experimental Design	439	27		470	38		471	39	
Human Learning/Cognition	423	22		461	35		451	31	
Social	426	23		489	46		453	32	
Statistics	432	25		----	----		----	----	
OVERALL	417	20	40	469	38		449	31	71

IV. Discussion

The 2018 administration of the ACAT was deemed by the AY 2017-18 DPAC to be flawed resulting in the re-administration of the ACAT in AY 2018-2019. The subtests administered in 2018 and 2019 differ somewhat from the subtests administered in AY 2022-23. Nonetheless, the best index of student performance on the ACAT remains their *overall* score; it is apparent that our students' performance on the ACAT decreased notably from the 2019 administration to the 2023 administration of the exam, as indicated by the decrease in overall ACAT scores.

The FSU administrations of the ACAT bookend the COVID pandemic. The results are globally consistent with some of the other available data about our students during this period. Dr. Anna Flanagan documented the sense of disruption experienced by some of our students during the early part of the pandemic. Dr. Kim Arditte Hall documented the mental health struggles of some of our students during AY 2022-23, the same period during which this

administration of the ACAT was conducted. While the impact of the pandemic on FSU psychology students who participated in the AY 2022-23 administration of the ACAT was not directly nor independently evaluated, it seems likely that the decreased performance documented in this ACAT administration at least in part reflects the impact that the pandemic had on our students' learning. This possibility is reinforced by the nature of the ACAT reference sample. Approximately 65% of the reference group ACAT scores reflect administrations of the exam *before* COVID.

The 'big picture' painted by the three administrations of the ACAT merits reflection. The ACAT questions do not match our curriculum precisely. There is uncertainty about the level of motivation our students have had when they have taken the exam. However, both of these issues are likely to also apply to the reference group against which our students' ACAT performance is measured. Despite these questions and any imperfections in the administration of the ACAT, our students have consistently performed below their peers.

The pattern of results suggests that at or near the point of being graduated our students' ability to demonstrate their knowledge of select subdomains of psychology is consistently below the ACAT national norms. These data would be worth understanding further under any circumstances. Given the current climate in higher education, including the apparent competition for students, there may be more reason than ever to understand whether there is a disconnect between what we as a faculty believe we are delivering and what our students are learning (i.e., retaining).

V. Recommendations

1. Discuss how much we care about these results as a faculty rather than as a committee. The ACAT data will be presented to the department faculty at our December 2023 department meeting. The faculty will also have a longer period of time to digest and discuss the data at our departmental end of the year retreat in May.

2. Consider ways to better understand the story being told by the pattern of ACAT results presented.   This may require revision of the current department assessment plan. It may be more sensible to have a deeper understanding of this learning outcome and revisit it in 4 years, than to have a little information about the 5 learning in the current assessment plan. It is likely that having a deeper understanding of this learning outcome would help illuminate other facets of our students' learning.