

# California State University, Fresno Department of Psychology Undergraduate Program

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## Goals And Objectives for Undergraduate Psychology Majors

### Goals -- Knowledge, skills, and values unique to psychology

**1. Theory and Content in Psychology:**

Students should be familiar with the major theoretical approaches, findings, and historical trends in psychology.

**2. Methodology:**

Students should understand and be able to use major research methods in psychology, including design, data analysis, and interpretation.

**3. Applied Psychology:**

Students should have an understanding of the applications of psychology to personal, social, and organizational issues.

### Goals -- Knowledge, skills, and values for undergraduates developed in psychology.

**4. Technology, computers, and information competence:**

Students should demonstrate information competence and the ability to use computers and other technology for these purposes.

**5. Critical thinking, logic, and problem-solving:**

Students should use, respect, and appreciate skeptical inquiry, critical thinking, and the scientific approach to understanding behavior.

**6. Cultural awareness/diversity:**

Students should have an understanding of cultural diversity.

**7. Communication skills:**

Students should express themselves effectively in written and oral communication.

## Objectives for GOAL 1 -- Theory and Content in Psychology

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### Theory and Content in Psychology

Students should be familiar with the major theoretical approaches, findings, and historical trends in psychology.

#### Objectives:

1. Explain and distinguish among three of the following theoretical approaches: biological/neuroscience, psychodynamic, cognitive, social/developmental, and behavioral.
2. Demonstrate an understanding of the difference between scientific and popular psychology and evaluate the scientific method as a tool for understanding human thought and behavior.
3. Summarize and evaluate the literature on topics in psychology, including distinguishing between primary and secondary sources and empirical vs. other sources.
4. Demonstrate an understanding of at least two applied areas of psychology (e.g., clinical, abnormal, industrial, health and physical disability, behavior and cognitive change techniques, family counseling, and environmental).
5. Demonstrate a broad knowledge of theory and research in at least two of the following areas of psychology:
  - a. personality, social processes, and developmental changes in human thought and behavior.
6. Demonstrate a broad knowledge of theory and research in at least two of the following areas of psychology: perception, cognition, learning, memory, motivation, and physiological psychology with laboratory experience.
7. Demonstrate a general understanding of at least one of the following areas of psychology, including how the information is used in our society:
  - a. psychological tests and measurements, computer applications, and intermediate statistics.
8. Demonstrate knowledge of the history of psychology.

## Objectives for GOAL 2 -- Methodology

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### Methodology

Students should understand and be able to use major research methods in psychology, including design, data analysis, and interpretation.

### Objectives

#### Knowledge

1. Demonstrate knowledge of basic measurement issues and techniques used by psychologists.
2. Demonstrate knowledge of different research methodologies employed by psychologists.
3. Demonstrate understanding of the appropriate use of various research designs for addressing different types of questions and hypotheses.
4. Demonstrate understanding of the appropriate use of various data analytic techniques for addressing different types of questions and hypotheses.
5. Demonstrate understanding of APA guidelines for the ethical treatment of human and nonhuman research participants.
6. Evaluate the appropriateness of conclusions presented in disseminated research relevant to psychology.
7. Place research questions in an appropriate theoretical context.

#### Skills

8. Demonstrate the ability to locate relevant research, theory, and information necessary to plan, conduct, and interpret the results of research studies.
9. Demonstrate the ability to formulate testable research hypotheses.
10. Design basic studies to address psychological questions using different research methodologies.
11. Collect, analyze, and report data designed to answer a psychological question under supervised direction.
12. Apply APA ethical guidelines in the design, data collection, analysis, interpretation, and reporting of psychological research.
13. Apply and interpret basic descriptive and inferential statistics.

## Objectives for GOAL 3 -- Application of Psychology

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### Application of Psychology

Students should have an understanding of the applications of psychology to personal, social, and organizational issues.

#### Objectives

1. Construct examples of how psychological theories and principles relate to everyday life.
2. Explain an observed or described behavior using at least three different psychological theories or models.
3. Design an action plan for improving a psychology-related circumstance or problem. This involves:
  - a. Knowledge. Define a problem in need of change.
  - b. Comprehension. Describe what needs to be changed.
  - c. Application. Apply psychological theories and principles to the specified problem.
  - d. Analysis. Compare and contrast different perspectives for the solution of the problem and evaluate the empirical support for the effectiveness of the solutions.
  - e. Synthesis. Design and formulate an ethical plan of action.
  - f. Evaluation. Assess the effectiveness of the plan and solution(s) employed.
4. Formulate how the knowledge, skills, and/or values of psychology can be applied to various careers.
5. Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of field experience.
6. Using APA ethical guidelines, describe how to deal appropriately with others in applied settings and recognize the unethical application of psychological principles.
7. Demonstrate an understanding of how the study of psychology enables individuals to make informed judgments that strengthen the community and build public policy.
8. Explain the value of psychological science in society, including how it suggests solutions for real-world problems such as violence, mental illness, homelessness, or physical disabilities.
9. Describe various types of psychological disorders using the most recent version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders.
10. Based on diagnoses from the most recent version of the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, describe appropriate interventions for at least one psychological disorder and evaluate the effectiveness of the interventions using psychological research.

## Objectives for GOAL 4 -- Technology, Computers, and Information Competence

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### Technology, Computers, and Information Competence

Students should demonstrate information competence and the ability to use computers and other technology for these purposes.

#### Objectives

1. Demonstrate these minimum skills: using a personal computer to make, save, and transfer files; avoiding viruses; using basic word processing and data analysis programs; using and accessing email and browsing the Web.
2. Demonstrate information competence at each stage in the following process:
  - a. Formulating a topic. Choosing a topic and restating it in narrower and broader terms.
  - b. Determining the types of information needed. Identifying sources of information from multiple media and describing their relation to the chosen topic.
  - c. Locating appropriate sources by searching electronic and traditional databases and providing evidence of the search.
  - d. Gathering appropriate sources from multiple media and retrieving information from distant and local sources.
  - e. Differentiating between primary vs. secondary sources, empirical vs. non-empirical sources, and peer-reviewed vs. professional vs. other sources from multiple media.
  - f. Evaluating the quality and appropriateness of the identified sources regardless of the media, including its value and accuracy.
3. Organize and report information using appropriate software to produce understandable reports of the psychological literature, methodology, and statistical analyses in APA style, including graphical data presentations.
4. Use information and technology ethically and responsibly, including:
  - a. Giving examples of and identifying examples of plagiarism.
  - b. Discussing why plagiarism is unethical.
  - c. Using citations correctly for a variety of media sources.
  - d. Knowing the limitations of statistical techniques and data collection methods.
  - e. Knowing the limitations of one's own understanding of the literature, statistics, and methodology.

## Objectives for GOAL 5 -- Critical Thinking, Logic, and Problem-Solving

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### Critical Thinking, Logic, and Problem-Solving

Students should use, respect, and appreciate skeptical inquiry, critical thinking, and the scientific approach to understanding behavior.

### Objectives

1. Demonstrate critical thinking skills and abilities acquired through training and experience in scientific methodology, including the ability to:
  - a. Identify, describe, and compare major scientific methods for gathering and analyzing information and explaining behavior.
  - b. Use knowledge of research design to justify and challenge research conclusions.
  - c. Support conclusions with reasoning and evidence.
2. Evaluate the merit of information, including the ability to:
  - a. Differentiate fact from fiction.
  - b. Differentiate the probable from the improbable.
  - c. Recognize and evaluate the source and context of information.
  - d. Identify and explain inappropriate assertions.
3. Approach problems effectively, including the ability to:
  - a. Articulate problems clearly.
  - b. Think divergently by generating multiple solutions to problems.
  - c. Recognize and defend against common reasoning fallacies.

## Objectives for GOAL 6 -- Cultural Awareness

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### Cultural Awareness

Students should have an understanding of cultural diversity.

### Objectives

1. Demonstrate an awareness of and respect for the variety of behavior, experience, and perspective accompanying diverse backgrounds and demographic characteristics (e.g., age, race, disability, sexual orientation, class, ethnicity, religion, cognitive abilities).
2. Examine the major cultural components that have influenced one's personal identity.
3. Demonstrate an understanding of how cultural identity influences beliefs, values, and interactions with others.
4. Demonstrate understanding of the impact and issues of institutional and individual power, privilege, and oppression and their relation to prejudice, discrimination, and inequity.
5. Examine and challenge one's own prejudicial attitudes.
6. Evaluate the appropriateness of psychological theories and/or interventions for a specific cultural group.
7. Identify examples of racism, sexism and/or classism in psychological research, theories, or interventions.
8. Describe ethical principles that pertain to issues of culture and diversity.

## Objectives for GOAL 7 -- Communication Skills

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### Communication Skills

Students should be able to express themselves effectively in written and oral communication.

- Effective writing skills include producing documents that communicate ideas clearly, are well-organized, are free from major writing errors, and are appropriate to the topic.
- Effective oral communication skills include speaking in a clear, well-organized manner, appropriate to the topic and easy to understand.

### Objectives

1. Demonstrate effective writing skills in at least three formats:
  - a. essays, graphs and tables, correspondence, and technical papers.
2. Demonstrate effective writing skills for at least three purposes:
  - a. defending, explaining, arguing, and teaching.
3. Use all elements of APA style appropriate to the form of writing:
  - a. including APA- formatted reference citations in the text and entries for the reference list.
4. Demonstrate effective oral communication skills in at least two formats:
  - a. group discussion, debate, and lecture or individual presentation.
5. Demonstrate effective oral communication skills for at least two purposes including:
  - a. defending, explaining, persuading, arguing, and teaching.