

Bachelor of Science Psychology

Program Review—Campus Committee Review

I. Review of Program Goals, Objectives and Activities

A. Are the intended educational (learning) goals for the program appropriate and assessed?

The educational goals of the Psychology program are well-suited to the broad applications of psychology and align with the institution's commitment to undergraduate education. The goals are effectively assessed through a combination of student research involvement, faculty contributions to scholarship, and student career outcomes. The program is designed to provide students with a solid foundation in theoretical knowledge and hands-on research experience, which are essential for success in a variety of careers and for pursuing postgraduate study. The program's success in providing supportive courses for other majors helps to integrate psychology into a wider educational context, further enhancing the program goals.

B. How are the faculty and students accomplishing the program's goals and objectives?

The faculty and students of the Psychology program at UAM are actively contributing to the program's goals through their dedication to teaching, research, and providing essential courses for a wide range of students across the university. While there are challenges in student success rates for certain courses, the faculty are continually striving to improve educational outcomes. The program's integration into various degree paths enhances its relevance and broadens its impact, while the focus on research and scientific literacy ensures that students are well-prepared for professional and academic success. As a result, the program's goals and objectives are being successfully met, even if incremental improvements in some areas, such as pass rates, are still ongoing.

C. How is the program meeting market/industry demands and/or preparing students for advanced study?

The Psychology program is addressing both the immediate employment demands in the psychology-related fields and providing a strong foundation for students pursuing advanced degrees. The program is effectively positioned to meet the evolving needs of the job market while also ensuring students are well-prepared for postgraduate study in psychology and related disciplines. The program's relevance to local and national employment trends, coupled with its focus on foundational psychology education, makes it a valuable asset for students and the workforce at large.

D. Is there sufficient student demand for the program?

While the total number of Psychology majors has seen some decline, the program still maintains substantial student demand, particularly due to its broad applicability across

various degree programs. Its role as a major generator of credit hour production within UAM, along with its sustained relevance across multiple academic disciplines, indicates that there is sufficient demand for the program, both among majors and non-majors.

- E. Do course enrollments and program graduation/completion rates justify the required resources?

As with most programs at an open-enrollment university, there are areas for improvement in student success, particularly in pass rates. However, the Psychology program at UAM continues to justify its resource allocation due to several factors. The program's high course enrollments, broad reach across multiple degree programs, and alignment with both market demands and advanced academic study highlight its significance. Psychology courses are essential for generating credit hours and serve a diverse student population, fulfilling academic requirements across disciplines. Additionally, the program plays a vital role in preparing students for professional careers and postgraduate education in fields with strong job growth projections. The Psychology program's ongoing contribution to UAM's academic and workforce goals makes a compelling case for its continued investment.

II. Review of Program Curriculum

- A. Is the program curriculum appropriate to meet current and future market/industry needs and/or prepare students for advanced study?

Following the guidelines specified by the American Psychological Association, the UAM Psychology faculty has designed a program to meet the goals of students entering the workforce for pursuing graduate study. The program styles itself as *scientific*; as such it emphasizes critical thinking aligned with statistical and research methods. These skills allow students to apply knowledge to such disciplines as business, economics, and public health. The curriculum also fosters communication skills and cultural and ethical competence. Specific courses provide theoretical and practical applications in all of these skills. The faculty provides specific documentation of this assertion in its self-study.

- B. Are the institutional policies and procedures appropriate to keep the program curriculum current to meet industry standards?

The self-study reveals that the faculty takes seriously the policies and procedures necessary for a sound program. Using the guidelines as references above, the faculty reviews its courses and policies to ensure that it meets the standards, amending their curriculum as necessary.

C. Are program exit requirements appropriate?

The Psychology program follows the state and institutional policies by providing appropriate sequences of all course work in the curriculum, including general education requirements. The departmental eight-semester plans as outlined in the University catalog detail well the expectations for students. The catalog also outlines the requirements for each of the options in the Psychology major. As students progress toward completion of the program of study, the Office of the Registrar carefully checks transcripts for all prospective graduates.

D. Does the program contain evidence of good health/focus and currency, including consistency with good practices?

The Psychology faculty practices on-going reviews of their course offerings. They keep up with the trends in their field and adjust their curriculum as needed to meet the needs of industry and societal changes. When the faculty sees the need for modifying, adding, or deleting courses according to current trends and policies, the department follows the procedures for modifying the curriculum through the campus Curriculum & Standards Committee. This process allows for the entire university community to take part in assuring good practices within programs.

E. Are students introduced to experiences within the workplace and introduced to professionals in the field?

As noted in the established curriculum a number of the psychology courses include practicums, which allow students to work in specific activities in a “field” setting. These experiences allow students to apply their academic training in real-life situations. In these settings, students can meet and interact with professionals in the field. Students and faculty also participate in community services projects through the Baptist Children’s Home and the Vera Lloyd facility. Students are also involved in research projects and experiments that offer practical experience and exposure to professionals in the field.

F. Does the program promote and support interdisciplinary initiatives?

UAM’s general education core ensures that students have interdisciplinary experiences. Students have opportunities to take a variety of math and science courses, and courses in literature and film.

- G. Does the program provide respect and understanding for cultural diversity as evidenced in the curriculum, program activities, in assignment of program responsibilities and duties; in honors, awards, and scholarship recognition; in recruitment?

The School of Social and Behavioral Sciences and the Psychology program serve as exemplars in promoting cultural diversity in all areas. Their curriculum is a sound one that recognizes the importance of these goals; its faculty represent individuals with diverse backgrounds. Students in Psychology consistently receive honors, awards, and scholarships on campus. Also many of them participate in Alpha Chi Honor Society, whose mission statement is academic excellence coupled with “integrity and diversity, and service to others.”

III. Review of Academic Support

- A. Does the program provide appropriate quality and quantity of academic advising and mentoring of students?

The Psychology program at the University of Arkansas at Monticello (UAM), part of the School of Social and Behavioral Sciences (SSBS), is dedicated to offering students various career opportunities and advanced study options. Psychology majors can pursue roles such as mental health practitioners, human resource specialists, human factors engineers, and basic researchers. Additionally, the program offers minors in Psychology and Human Services, with many courses meeting general education requirements and serving as supportive options for other majors. Alongside fulfilling these academic needs, the program actively engages in research.

The faculty in the Psychology department at UAM are not only involved in teaching but also maintain active research pursuits. Notable faculty members include Eric Prichard (at UAM since 2016), Jeanette Braswell (2015-2024), K. Amber Turner (2019-2024), and Seungyeon Lee (2014-2022). Dr. Prichard focuses on neuropsychology, particularly handedness and laterality, and also explores the philosophy and sociology of science. Since joining UAM, he has authored or co-authored 13 peer-reviewed articles and contributed to nine academic conference presentations. Dr. Braswell’s research centers on developmental and social psychology, resulting in three peer-reviewed publications and one poster presentation during her tenure. Dr. Turner engaged in clinical psychology research, producing two academic papers and two conference presentations. Dr. Lee focused on educational research, authoring or co-authoring 13 peer-reviewed publications, and participating in 14 conference presentations.

Over the past decade, UAM faculty have supervised many undergraduate research projects. Students commonly present their work at the Southwest Psychological

Association meetings and the Arkansas Symposium for Undergraduate Students, primarily through empirical data poster presentations. Faculty strive to provide motivated students with opportunities to collect data, apply statistical methods, and present at conferences attended by peers and faculty from other institutions.

- B. Does the program provide for retention of qualified students from term to term and support student progress toward and achievement of graduation?

A total of 31 student presentations at these key conferences over the last 10 years are based on faculty records and communication. The numbers likely underrepresent the total, as most projects involve multiple student authors, and many students were unable to present from 2020 to 2022 due to COVID-19 restrictions.

Undergraduate research is essential to the program, allowing students to contribute original scholarship. Faculty have also taken students to less common conferences, such as the Annual Regional Student Scholars Forum in Louisiana and the Arkansas Psychological Association conventions. Notably, there are approximately three presentations at ASPS for everyone at SWPA, as SWPA events tend to be more costly and are often held in larger cities, attracting students most interested in pursuing graduate studies. For instance, two UAM students, guided by Seungyeon Lee and Eric Prichard, received an award for their presentation at SWPA in 2017.

Recently, UAM Psychology faculty have encouraged students to present their research on campus. The UAM Social Work program now hosts a regular undergraduate symposium, inviting psychology students from statistics and research methods courses to participate. Although no formal tracking has been established, many psychology students have had the chance to present to faculty and peers on campus. Additionally, students in advanced research methods courses typically spend at least one class session at the end of the semester showcasing their research to an audience that includes faculty and students from various disciplines. Most UAM psychology graduates will have presented at least once, often at the Social Work symposium or during the research methods course. Students interested in further studies are encouraged to enhance their projects and participate in regional conferences.

The UAM Psychology Science program remains vibrant and meets ADHE standards for viability. Its focus on undergraduate research, hands-on learning, and faculty involvement provides students with a rich and valuable academic experience.

IV. Review of Program Faculty

- A. Do program faculty have appropriate academic credentials and/or professional licensure/certification?

Ms. Ashley Courson	M.S.	Instructor	Guidance and Counselling
Dr. Eric Prichard	Ph.D.	Associate Professor	Neuropsychology
Dr. Yvette Prior	Psy.D.	Assistant Professor	Industrial Psychology

Dr. Jeanette Braswell*	Ph.D.	Associate Professor	Developmental Psychology
Dr. Amber Turner*	Ph.D.	Assistant Professor	Clinical Psychology

Yes. Dr. Prichard, Dr. Prior, Dr. Braswell, and Dr. Turner all earned their Ph.D. and have specialty areas. Dr. Prichard specializes in Neuropsychology, Dr. Prior specializes in Industrial Psychology, Dr. Braswell specializes in Developmental Psychology, and Dr. Turner focuses on Clinical Psychology. Dr. Prichard, Dr. Prior, and Dr. Braswell have all earned the rank of Associate Professor while Dr. Turner earned the rank of Assistant Professor. Ms. Ashly Courson has earned a Master of Science degree and specializes in Guidance and Counselling. Ms. Courson's UAM rank is an instructor.

The Psychology program currently employs one part-time faculty member: Dr. Stephen Berry, who teaches PSYC 21003 Developmental Psychology and PSYC 32483 Social Psychology. Before she was hired as a full-time faculty member, Ashley Courson served as adjunct faculty for two years teaching PSYC 46483 Applied Human Service Skills. The minimum requirements for adjunct faculty are a master's degree with at least 18 hours of graduate course work in Psychology or a closely related field, such as counselling.

B. Are the faculty orientation and faculty evaluation processes appropriate?

Yes. During UAM Professional Development Week, there is an official orientation program for full-time faculty. This orientation consists of training in the fields of advising, regulations, available resources, and teaching facilities. During that week, faculty have the opportunity to participate in professional development training including academic advising, academic and institutional software, and online teaching. UAM full-time faculty complete annual self-evaluations in accordance with UAM Faculty Handbook policies and procedures. Additionally, faculty complete peer-evaluations annually. All faculty members are evaluated annually by the Dean. Faculty are also evaluated by a minimum of three peer faculty members and are observed in a classroom setting by the peer evaluators. The tenured faculty and non-tenure track faculty who have completed six years of service are required to undergo the full evaluation process at least once every five years. A full evaluation requires that three colleagues be chosen as peer evaluators with the individual being evaluated choosing two and the Dean choosing one. Peer reviewers of faculty having a full evaluation must make at least one classroom observation. Upon completion of the previous process, the Dean reviews the combined evaluations to assess faculty performances. The Dean meets with the faculty to review accomplishments and makes suggestions. After the process, the Dean submits all paperwork to the Provost and Vice Chancellor for Academic Affairs.

C. Is the faculty workload in keeping with best practices?

Yes. The course load for a full-time faculty member who holds the academic rank of Assistant Professor or higher is 12 semester credit hours per term. The course load for those holding the rank of Instructor is 15 semester credit hours per term. Overload opportunities are occasionally offered for additional pay. In addition, summer teaching opportunities are available for courses that meet enrollment requirements.

V. Review of Program Resources

A. Is there an appropriate level of institutional support for program operation?

The university provides support for the full-time faculty members in development in teaching, research, and service that include encouragement for faculty to develop special topic courses and technical support in instructional software.

B. Are faculty, library, professional development and other program resources sufficient?

The Fred J. Taylor Library and Technology Center's collections includes printed books, e-books, journals, e-journals, and databases in addition to inter-library loans. Electronic databases are upgraded regularly giving faculty access to new publications that include ProQuest Centra, JSTOR, and EBSCO.

VI. Review of Program Effectiveness

A. Indicate areas of program strength.

The Psychology program's strength lies in its dedicated faculty, who combine innovative teaching, research, and community engagement. Since 2014, the program has been revitalized by new Ph.D. hires, with notable contributions including Dr. Lee's leadership of Psi Chi, Dr. Prichard's campus leadership and publications, Dr. Turner's award-winning teaching, and Dr. Braswell's establishment of a research lab. New faculty, Dr. Prior and Ms. Courson, show similar promise.

Faculty innovations, particularly post-COVID, include diverse course delivery methods, interactive tools, and enhanced advising, earning excellent student evaluations. Experiential learning opportunities, such as practicums, Psi Chi, and research symposia, further enrich student development and professional readiness.

B. Indicate the program areas in need of improvement within the next 12 months; and over the next 2-5 years.

The Psychology program faces two critical challenges: faculty turnover and uncompetitive salaries. Faculty stability, once a strength, has eroded with the departure of Drs. Lee, Braswell, Turner, and soon Dr. Prior, leaving the program short-staffed and reliant on limited faculty for core courses like statistics and research methods. The loss of experienced teaching talent and increased workload

strains the program's ability to recruit students, manage Psi Chi and the Psychology Club, and sustain growth.

Compounding this is UAM's low faculty salaries, which lag significantly behind regional and national medians. Rising living costs have diminished the appeal of the program, making recruitment and retention of Ph.D.-qualified faculty increasingly difficult. While recent hires address immediate gaps, adjuncts cannot ensure long-term stability or quality for core courses. Without competitive salaries, the program risks further attrition, jeopardizing its ability to meet student needs and maintain academic standards.

- C. Indicate areas for program development based on market/industry demands that have not been identified by the institution.

The Psychology program aims to address key priorities in student engagement, experiential learning, and infrastructure:

1. Psi Chi Honor Society Revitalization:

Plans include semesterly interest meetings, utilizing the new Psychology Research Lab for student projects, and encouraging participation in state-level conferences. Challenges include faculty scheduling constraints, with an estimated cost of \$70 per semester for meetings and \$500–\$1200 for conference expenses. Long-term funding support may come from Psi Chi national grants.

2. Psychology Practicum Expansion:

Leveraging Ms. Courson's expertise in counseling and community ties, the program will recruit students in Spring 2025 for Fall 2025 placements. Efforts will focus on securing internships and professionalizing students without additional budget needs.

3. Classroom Furniture Upgrades:

Completing the modernization of 2nd and 3rd floor MCB classrooms will cost approximately \$35,000, enhancing facilities for all SSBS programs.

Areas for further development include detailed recruitment strategies for Psi Chi, sustainable funding models, clear success metrics, and aligning classroom upgrades with broader academic goals.

VII. Review of Instruction by Distance Technology (if program courses offered by distance)

- A. Are the program distance technology courses offered/delivered in accordance with best practices?

According to the submitted Program Review Self-Study, this is not required for programs that do not administer 50% or more of the program online. While there are some courses in the program that utilize online offerings, the threshold for review has not been met. As such, questions VII.A was not addressed. That said, the Psychology Program included a review of Instruction by Distance Technology in the context of their course offerings.

In addition, information was included regarding interaction with students online. In summary, instructors interact with students through online content delivery, assessment, discussion boards, and email.

- B. Does the institution have appropriate procedures in place to assure the security of personal information?

The protection of personal information is set forth in the information security policies regulated by the State of Arkansas and administered through the University. These guidelines state that UAM can only collect personal information through a secure link and with prior approval from that individual. The Office of Academic Computing polices this, providing details of the presence of personal information. UAM's Learning Management System (Blackboard Ultra), is held to the same set of security standards as all Information Systems maintained by the university.

- C. Are technology support services appropriate for students enrolled in and faculty teaching courses/programs utilizing technology?

Technology support services are provided through the Office of Academic Computing. This office provides support to both faculty and students. Workshops, videos, and documentation are provided to both faculty and students on a regular basis to provide learning opportunities for this platform.

- D. Are policies for student/faculty ratio, and faculty course load in accordance with best practices?

Policies regarding faculty course load are set forth by the UAM Faculty Handbook. Distance education courses count toward a faculty member's course load in the same manner as face-to-face courses in terms of credit hours taught and compensation. Faculty are encouraged to create courses for the online environment. To that end, a one-time incentive for online course creation is offered.

- E. Are policies on intellectual property in accordance with best practices?

Not addressed.

VIII. Review of Program Research and Service

- A. Are the intended research and creative outcomes for each program appropriate, assessed and results utilized?

The Faculty are active in research in their respective disciplines. They are active in professional organizations and regularly publish in peer reviewed journals. Some have published monographs. Please note that some of the faculty under review have since left for other academic institutions and so these positions have yet to be filled.

- B. Are the intended outreach/service/entrepreneurial outcomes for each program's initiatives appropriate assessed and results utilized?

The Faculty are also active in both professional as well as both local and regional civil organizations. They often work with students outside the classroom and present their respective research skills to popular non-academic audiences.