

**Psychology Undergraduate Minor Proposal**  
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**Executive Summary**

This proposal is for an 18 credit hour minor program in psychology.

The program is designed to make psychology more accessible to non-psychology majors in a way which could contribute to the quality of their training/education in their academic major. Psychology as a science and a profession has relevance to studies in many disciplines including nursing, biology, architecture, business, law, communication studies, political science, social work, counseling, and education. As such, a Minor program is likely to attract considerable interest from a wide range of students.

The curriculum for the proposed Psychology Minor program is based upon existing psychology courses and does not require any additional resources or monies for start-up or maintainance.

The proposed minor program has been designed in a manner consistent with the Academic Standards for Minors approved by the McNichols Faculty Assembly on September 7, 2006. The standards for psychology minors seen in other universities and as recommended by relevant professional bodies (e.g., American Psychological Association) were also taken into consideration when designing the proposed minor.

The psychology minor curriculum consists of one required course (PYC 100-Introductory Psychology) and five others that are selected from four course content domains. The curriculum is designed such that students meet a variety of learning objectives and outcomes.

Attached to this proposal as an appendix are the syllabi for all courses included in the proposal Psychology Minor.

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## Description of the Psychology Minor Program

### **Catalog Description**

The Psychology Minor program is a minimum 18 credit hour (6 course) program designed to give students broad exposure to psychology as a scientific and professional discipline. This program is relevant to any students pursuing academic majors which involve working with people, ideas, and/or social and communications systems including (but not limited to) Nursing, Biology, Business, Communication Studies, Law, Philosophy, Political Science, Social Work, Counseling, Education, English, Engineering, and Religious Studies.

Beginning with introductory psychology, students in the Minor program are required to take courses from at least three of four content areas- Basic Processes, Development/Family Processes, Clinical Processes, and Social Issues/Group Dynamics.

At the end the completion of the Minor Program in psychology, students are expected to be able to: discuss the role of psychology in interdisciplinary collaborations; demonstrate appropriate breadth of knowledge in selected psychology content areas; apply their broad knowledge of psychology to formulating career choices, and; appreciate the importance of lifelong learning for professional and personal development.

### **Academic Standards**

In order to declare and successfully complete the Psychology Minor, students should note the following requirements and conditions:

1. A student must declare a Major before declaring a Psychology Minor.
2. A student should declare a Psychology Minor by the first semester of the junior year. A Psychology Minor *cannot* be added after graduation.
3. A minimum of 18 credits is required for the Minor.
4. Students are permitted to only complete one Minor at UDM.
5. The Psychology Minor will be certified at the same time that the student's Major(s) is certified for graduation.
6. Students must maintain a minimum cumulative GPA of 2.0 in Psychology Minor courses in order to successfully complete the program.
7. A Minor will not be awarded if the student is earning or has already earned a Bachelor's degree with Psychology as the Major concentration.
8. At most, six (6) credit hours within the Psychology Minor program may be counted toward degree requirements for a student's Major.

9. Where indicated for certain courses in the curriculum (see below) students must complete prerequisite courses before taking the specified course in the Psychology Minor curriculum.
10. All students in the Psychology Minor must take Psychology 100. Thereafter, they must take three (3) courses from three (3) of the four concentration areas. The remaining two (2) courses can be taken from any concentration area.
11. A minimum of nine (9) credit hours must come from junior or senior level (i.e. 300+ level) courses.
12. No course required for the Minor Program can be taken on a pass/fail basis.
13. Independent study courses and Capstone courses from the Psychology Major curriculum will not count towards the Minor degree.
14. At least 12 credits (4 courses) required for the Minor must be taken at UDM unless the courses are taken as part of a consortium agreement.

Upon successful completion, the Psychology Minor will be listed on the student's final transcript, but will not be listed on the diploma.

### Psychology Minor Curriculum

For the degree of “Minor in Psychology,” a student must complete a minimum of 18 credit hours of Psychology courses as listed below. Descriptions of each of these courses can be found in the UDM course catalog.

#### **Minimum requirements of proposed curriculum**

(i) PYC 100- Introductory Psychology	3cr
(ii) One course from three (3) out of four (4) course distribution areas in Psychology Minor curriculum. At least one of these should be a junior or senior (i.e. 300+) level course	9cr
(iii) Two junior or senior (i.e. 300+) level courses from any course distribution area in the Psychology Minor curriculum	6cr
<b>Total number of Credits</b>	<b>18cr</b>

#### **Psychology Minor Courses**

(i) Core Course-	
PYC 100 Introductory Psychology	3 cr
(ii) Course Distribution areas-	
<i>1. Basic Processes</i>	
PYC 201 Research Methods I (Co-requisite: STA 225, or MTH214 for Engineering & Science students)	3 cr
PYC 202 Research Methods II (Pre-requisite: PYC 201)	3 cr
PYC 407 Psychobiology (formerly Physiological Psych) (Pre-requisite: PYC 201)	3 cr
PYC 409 Perceptual & Cognitive processes (Pre-requisite: PYC 201)	3 cr
PYC 414 Learning & Memory (Pre-requisite: PYC 201)	3 cr

2. Developmental Psychology/Family Life

PYC 250 Lifespan Development	3 cr
PYC 233 Parent/child relationships	3 cr
PYC 234 Infancy/Early Childhood Development	3 cr
PYC 236 Middle Childhood/Adolescent Development	3 cr
PYC 256 Adult Development and Aging	3 cr
PYC 275 Human Sexuality	3 cr
PYC 351 Family Development	3 cr
PYC 451 Death and Dying	3 cr

3. Clinical Processes

PYC 341 Personality Psychology	3 cr
PYC 342 Abnormal Psychology	3 cr
PYC 343 Health Psychology	3 cr

4. Social issues/Group Dynamics

PYC 260 Social Psychology (formerly PYC360 + PYC361)	3 cr
PYC 350 Religion & Psychology	3 cr
PYC 354 Sex Differences/Sex Roles	3 cr
PYC 365 Exploring Leadership	3 cr
PYC 440 Cross Cultural Socialization	3 cr
PYC 370 I/O Psychology	3 cr
PYC 490 Group Dynamics	3 cr

### **Delivery Format of Psychology Minor Courses**

All courses in the proposed Psychology Minor curriculum will be delivered in the same manner as they are currently. Courses may involve use of lectures, internet, and/or laboratory work. Courses will be offered during the day and evenings on regular weekdays and Saturdays.

### **How the Psychology Minor Program Demonstrates Integrity and Academic Merit**

The psychology department undergraduate minor committee engaged in considerable discussion and information gathering to ensure that the proposed Minor Program is of a standard of quality consistent with (a) the Academic Standards for Minors approved by the McNichols Faculty Assembly on September 7, 2006, (b) the recommendations of professional organizations (e.g., American Psychological Association, and (c) the quality seen at other universities.

The minimum credit hour total for the proposed minor curriculum compares favorably with available statistics on undergraduate psychology minor programs in the USA (e.g. Stache, Perlman, McaCann, & McFadden , 1994).

### **Impact of Proposed Psychology Minor on other Departments**

Given that the proposed Psychology Minor is based entirely upon existing courses, the proposed program is not expected to have any notable negative effect on enrollment or student retention in other departments, schools, or colleges. As well, university students usually obtain a Minor even though it is not required. They do so to increase employment opportunities, or because they like the area of concentration (see Stache et al, 1994). A Psychology Minor curriculum at UDM will positively impact students in other department by providing an additional source of academic enrichment, and post-graduation marketability.

### **Psychology Minor Program and the UDM Mission**

The focus of the UDM Mission on the facilitation and integration of the intellectual, spiritual, ethical, and social development of our students resonates well with the overall mission and learning objectives of all existing programs within the Department of Psychology. The proposed Psychology Minor program will be delivered in a manner consistent with all current programs.

*Psychology Department Mission:* The study of psychology should be aimed at the acquisition of knowledge of the facts, causes of, and principles underlying behavior, development, motivation, and personality. As well, it should purposively strive to teach the application of psychological principles, evidence, and techniques to solve human problems. Of paramount importance to the successful study of psychology is integrating psychological knowledge with the humanities, the biological sciences, and the social sciences. The mission of the Psychology department is achieved by a set of five learning objectives:

- (1) Knowledge Base in Psychology-Demonstrate familiarity with major concepts in Psychology;
- (2) Research Methods in Psychology-Understand basic research methods in Psychology
- (3) Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology-Respect and use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and, when possible, the scientific approach to solve problems related to behavior and mental processes.
- (4) Application of Psychology-Understand and apply psychological principles to personal, social, and organizational issues
- (5) Values in Psychology-Value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and reflect other values that are the underpinnings of Psychology as a science.

### **Objectives, Learning Outcomes and Assessment**

In designing the Psychology Minor curriculum, the committee recognized that while a primary goal of the psychology Major curriculum is to provide depth and breadth of knowledge within psychology, the Minor must be designed to increase the *breadth* of education for non-psychology Majors (e.g. Stache, Perlman, McaCann, & McFadden , 1994). Hence, based on the American Psychological Association's *Task Force on Learning Goals and Outcomes* (see Halonen et al, 2002), the Psychology Minor curriculum committee proposed learning outcomes for the five broad objectives described in the preceding section of this proposal (see Table 1). The psychology faculty's evaluation of where the objectives and learning outcomes are addressed in the curriculum indicates the faculty's belief in its compliance with the guidelines set forth by the American Psychological Association.

Table 1. Learning Objectives and Outcomes for Proposed Psychology Minor Program

General Learning Objective	Specific Learning Outcome	Components of Learning Outcome	Where Taught in Minor Curriculum
1. Knowledge base of Psychology- Demonstrate familiarity with major concepts in Psychology	1.1 Characterize the nature of Psychology as a discipline	(a) Explain why Psychology is a science  (b) Identify and explain primary objectives of Psychology (Description, prediction, control, and understanding of behavior and mental processes)  (c) Explain psychology's unique place and history among the sciences and humanities	Core course (PYC 100)  Core course (PYC 100) and Basic Processes courses  Core course (PYC 100)
	1.2 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding representing appropriate breadth and depth in selected content areas of psychology	Theory and research representing 3 of the 4 general domains:  (a) Learning and Cognition  (b) Individual Differences, Personality, and Social Processes including those related to sociocultural and international dimensions  (c) Biological bases of behavior and mental processes including physiology, sensation, perception, comparative, motivation, and emotion  (d) Developmental changes in behavior and mental processes across the lifespan	Basic Processes courses  Clinical Processes courses Social Issues/Group Dynamics courses  Basic Processes courses Clinical Processes courses  Developmental Psychology/Family Life courses
2. Research Methods in Psychology- Understand basic research methods in psychology	2.1 Describe basic characteristics of the science of Psychology	--	Core course (PYC 100) Basic Processes courses
	2.2 Explain different research methods used by psychologists	--	Core course (PYC 100) Basic Processes courses
	2.3 Locate and use relevant computerized databases for research information	--	Core course (PYC 100) All courses
	2.4 Understand the need for a Code of Ethics in the treatment of human and nonhuman participants in the design, data collection, interpretation, and reporting of psychological research	--	Core course (PYC 100) All courses
3. Critical Thinking Skills in Psychology- Respect and use critical and creative thinking, skeptical inquiry, and, when possible, the scientific approach to solve problems related to behavior and mental processes	3.1 Use critical thinking effectively	(a) Identify and evaluate the source, context, and credibility of information.  (b) Avoid being swayed by appeals to emotion or authority  (c) Demonstrate an attitude of critical thinking that includes persistence, open-mindedness, tolerance for ambiguity and intellectual	Core course (PYC 100) All courses  Core course (PYC 100) All courses  All courses

		engagement	
	3.2 Use reasoning to recognize, develop, defend, and criticize arguments and other persuasive appeals.	Identify components of arguments (e.g., conclusions, premises/assumptions, gaps, counterarguments).	Core course (PYC 100) All courses
	3.3 Approach problems effectively	Articulate problems clearly	All courses
4. Application of Psychology- Understand and apply psychological principles to personal, social, and organization issues.	4.1 Describe major applied areas of psychology (e.g., clinical, counseling, industrial/organizational, school, health)	--	Core course (PYC 100)
	4.2 Identify appropriate applications of psychology in solving problems	(a) Pursuit and effect of healthy lifestyles	Core course (PYC 100) Clinical Processes courses Social issues courses Developmental courses
		(b) Origin and treatment of abnormal behavior	All courses
4.3 Articulate how psychological principles can be used to explain social issues and inform public policy	Recognize that sociocultural contexts may influence the application of psychological principles in solving social problems	Core course (PYC 100) Social issues/Group Dynamics courses	
5. Values in Psychology- Value empirical evidence, tolerate ambiguity, act ethically, and reflect other values that are the underpinnings of Psychology as a science	5.1 Recognize the need for ethical behavior in all aspects of the science and practice of psychology	--	Core Course (PYC 100) All courses
	5.2 Tolerate ambiguity and realize that psychological explanations are often complex and tentative	--	All courses
	5.3 Recognize and respect human diversity and understand that psychological explanations may vary across populations and contexts	--	Core course (PYC 100) Social Issues/Group Dynamics courses

*Assessment of Learning Outcomes*

The Psychology department recognizes the value of assessment in promoting student learning. With respect to the assessment of the learning outcomes listed above, the department (with the help of guidelines from the American Psychological Association; see <http://www.apa.org/ed/guidehomepage.html>) plans to (i) use multiple measures and sources consistent with resources, (ii) implement continuous assessment with clear, manageable timelines, (iii) help students succeed on assessment tasks by making expectations explicit and providing detailed feedback about performance quality, and (iv) evaluate the assessment practices to address issues of reliability, validity, and utility. A departmental committee will be formed to oversee assessment criteria for the Minor (and Major) on an annual basis. The assessment process will be similar to that used to assess the Major Curriculum.

*Assessment Strategies:* The major assessment strategies that the Psychology department anticipates implementing for the proposed Minor program are described below:

- (a) Classroom/Course Data: Assessment strategies involve (i) obtaining a sample of the best and worst tests/examinations and evaluating the quality of responses in relation to learning outcomes and (ii) syllabus audit, and (iii) reviews of student evaluations.
- (b) Individual Projects/Performance Assessment: Assessment strategies involve evaluation of sample of best and worst written products, oral presentations, graphic tests and displays, and/or posters in relation to learning outcomes. May also include structural or situational assessments (e.g., guided learning, in-baskets, critical situations, etc).
- (c) Self-Assessment- Samples of students will be asked to complete questionnaires which assess the extent to which they feel that they can demonstrate the learning outcomes.
- (d) Interviews/Surveys- Completion of exit and post-graduation interviews and surveys of samples of students/alumni.
- (e) Descriptive statistics on UDM Majors in the Psychology Minor, and distribution areas sampled by Minor students- This will be useful for future modifications of the Minor program.

### **Use of University Resources**

The proposed Psychology Minor program does not require the use of any university resources above and beyond what is currently needed to run existing psychology courses.

**Procedures for Modifying the Minor**

The Minor may be modified by following the same procedures set by the CLAE curriculum Committee, and by the MFA.

**Literature Cited**

American Psychological Association. <http://www.apa.org/ed/guidehomepage.html>

Halonen, J. et al, (2002). Undergraduate psychology major learning goals and outcomes: A report. See [www.apa.org/ed/pcue/taskforcereport2.pdf](http://www.apa.org/ed/pcue/taskforcereport2.pdf)

Stache, C., Perlman, B., McCann, L., & McFadden, S. (1994). A national survey of the academic minor and psychology. *Teaching of Psychology*, 21, 69-74

**Appendix**

Syllabi for Psychology Minor Courses have been reviewed by the  
Undergraduate Standards Committee