

Assessment Cycle 2021-2022

Psychology-Clinical Psychology (M.S.) (552)

Division: Gallaspy College of Education and Human Development

Department: Psychology

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Date: May 16, 2022

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Date: June 15, 2022

Northwestern Mission Statement. Northwestern State University is a responsive, student-oriented institution committed to acquiring, creating, and disseminating knowledge through innovative teaching, research, and service. With its certificate, undergraduate, and graduate programs, Northwestern State University prepares its increasingly diverse student population to contribute to an inclusive global community with a steadfast dedication to improving our region, state, and nation.

The Gallaspy Family College of Education and Human Development is committed to working collaboratively to acquire, create, and disseminate knowledge to Northwestern students through transformational, high-impact experiential learning practices, research, and service. Through the School of Education and Departments of Health and Human Performance, Military Science, Psychology, and Social Work, the College produces knowledgeable, inspired, and innovative graduates ready for lifelong learning who contribute to the communities in which they reside and professions they serve. Additionally, the GCEHD is dedicated to the communities served by the Marie Shaw Dunn Child Development Center, NSU Elementary Laboratory School, NSU Middle Laboratory School, and the NSU Child and Family Network to assist children and their families related to learning and development.

Department of Psychology Mission. The Department of Psychology (undergraduate degrees in Psychology and Addiction Studies and a master's degree in Clinical Psychology) is dedicated to providing high quality education by actively engaging in the discovery and dissemination of knowledge. Students develop a robust knowledge base of concepts and theories, scientific and critical thinking, ethical and social responsibility in a diverse world, communication, and professional development. As part of our educational mission, the Psychology Department provides encouragement and support for research and scholarship for both the faculty and students with opportunities for practicum and externship training experiences. These activities are designed to foster professionalism and prepare students for graduate education and/or immediate employment and service in the community.

Clinical Psychology Program Mission Statement: The mission of the clinical psychology graduate program is to educate students in the science and practice of clinical psychology so that they may develop into knowledgeable professionals who are

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intelligent consumers of research and competent and ethical providers of psychological services.

Methodology: The assessment process for the MS in Clinical Psychology program is as follows:

- (1) Data from assessment tools are collected and returned to the program coordinator.
- (2) The program coordinator will analyze the data to determine whether students have met measurable outcomes.
- (3) Results from the assessment will be discussed with the program faculty.
- (4) Individual meetings will be held with faculty teaching core graduate courses if required.
- (5) The Program Coordinator, in consultation with the Clinical Psychology Graduate Council, will propose changes to measurable outcomes, assessment tools for the next assessment period and, where needed, curricula and program changes.

Student Learning Outcomes:

SLO 1. Students will know and utilize the theories, techniques, and outcomes of major approaches to psychotherapy.

Course Map: PSYC 5200: Theories of Psychotherapy
PSYC 5260: Practicum I: Psychotherapy and Intervention

Measure: 1.1. (Direct – knowledge)

On an annual basis, students are administered a preliminary exam during orientation before starting the program to establish a baseline of knowledge. The exam covers the same four areas, including theories, which are covered by the program's comprehensive exams. This allows for pre- and post-course assessments. Because this is a preliminary evaluation, no particular score was expected.

Each student enrolled in PSYC 5200, a required course for Clinical Psychology graduate students, was administered a comprehensive exam as the final evaluation of the course. The exam is composed of questions developed by a faculty member and designed to evaluate the students' foundational knowledge of the theories of psychotherapy. The goal was for 80% of students to achieve a composite score of 70%. These scores were also compared to the preliminary exam scores with an anticipated positive change.

Finding: Target was met.

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Analysis:

In AC 2020-21, the target was met.

All seven students (100%) earned at least 70% on the targeted multiple-choice questions. Scores on the pretest ranged from 44 to 76% ($M = 54.29$, $SD = 13.83$). For the targeted items, scores on the comprehensive exam ranged from 72 to 92% ($M = 81.71$, $SD = 7.95$) and were significantly higher than those on the pretest (one-tailed paired t -test, $t_6 = -4.66$, $p = .002$). These results indicate students' knowledge of theories of psychotherapy significantly increased from the pre-comp to the comprehensive exam, which is evidence of improvement in the desired direction for this SLO.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty implemented the changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. In previous years, students were assigned theories for an applied art project solely based on their interests. In AC 2020-2021, using survey results, the instructor assigned students one of the earlier, more abstract theories and one of the more current, widely practiced, and empirically supported theoretical orientations. Using these two theories, the students completed two art projects and presented a brief description to the class, thereby gaining knowledge of the theories that they had to visually represent and clearly articulate to others. Balancing the older and newer theories consistently across students provided a comparison of diverse theories to aid in the professional development of their own theoretical orientation. While adopting current theories is logical given current practice and empirical support, the data had shown an imbalance and greater understanding of the newer theories. These changes were intended to improve the student's ability to know and utilize the theories, techniques, and outcomes of major approaches to psychotherapy, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2021-2022, the target was met.

Of the seven students, 100% earned at least 70% on the targeted multiple-choice questions. Scores on the pretest ranged from 40 to 80% ($M = 52.57$, $SD = 13.15$). For the comprehensive exam, the scores for the same targeted items were much more consistent and ranged from 80 to 92% ($M = 87.43$, $SD = 4.27$). These scores were significantly higher than the pretest scores (two-tailed paired t -test, $t_6 = -8.77$, $p < .001$), demonstrating increased knowledge of theories of psychotherapy and improvement in the desired direction. Moreover, only two items were missed by more than half of the class. While they were items regarding the older, more abstract theories (Gestalt and Individual Psychotherapy), the results revealed greater knowledge, in general, of these theories.

Decision or Recommendation.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2021-2022 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. The weakest performance on the comprehensive exam was on questions regarding Gestalt Psychotherapy. One possible reason is that students consistently verbalize their dislike of

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the theorist's brashness during the video demonstration and therefore disinterest in considering the theory for adoption. This video could inadvertently diminish their motivation in gaining a thorough knowledge of the theory. The Instructor will present another video of a current therapist's demonstration of the theoretical orientation, which is typically gentler and, therefore, more likable. In addition, one of the Case Conceptualization assignments will require the application of the Gestalt theory.

Measure: 1.2. (Direct – Skill/Ability)

At the end of the semester, students enrolled in PSYC 5270 (Practicum II), a required course for Clinical Psychology students, were evaluated by their supervisors on their knowledge and use of theoretical and scientific approaches to psychological treatment, including evidence-based practice. The goal was for 100% of enrolled students to demonstrate fundamental knowledge by scoring 3 or higher on the evaluation. The equivalent rating for the recently adopted (2018) evaluation form is a score of 3 (1 = Not Satisfactory, 2 = Needs Improvement, 3 = Satisfactory, and 4 = Superior).

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2020-21, the target was met.

For AC 2020-2021, Practicum II supervisors used the new 5-point Likert scale to evaluate the students' demonstration of knowledge about theories of counseling and psychotherapy and their application of a theoretically based approach when working with clients.

Table 1 AC2020-2021 scores

Psychological Intervention Skills	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Demonstrates knowledge of theories of psychotherapy.	3.00	.00
Takes a theoretically based approach to working w/clients.	3.20	.45

As seen in Table 1, all seven students enrolled in PSYC 5270 during the Spring semester received a satisfactory rating (3) for demonstrating knowledge of theories of psychotherapy. For the application of this knowledge with clients, the ratings ranged from 3 ($n = 6$) to 4 ($n = 1$), with $M = 3.20$.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to know and utilize the theories, techniques, and outcomes of major approaches to psychotherapy.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, it was not clear if the practicum evaluation 4-point Likert scale was limiting the possibility of differentiating a student's performance that is merely "satisfactory" from a student whose performance is above average but not superior. The goal is for students to

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perform better than satisfactorily. Therefore, the faculty modified the scale to include a 5-point scale (1 = Not Satisfactory, 2 = Needs Improvement, 3 = Satisfactory/Consistently Meets Standards, 4 = Consistently Meets High Standards, 5 = Exceeds High Standards).

The faculty evaluated the focus of theory in Practicum I and found it to be more of an informal approach. Therefore, supervisors incorporated Piercy and Sprenkle's (1988) set of theory-building questions throughout the semester during group supervision when students were discussing a client's case conceptualization, treatment plan, and therapeutic techniques. These questions challenged students to explain and justify their therapy strategies and interventions within the context of their theoretical orientation.

During group supervision, the other students attempted to identify the therapist's theoretical orientation and beliefs, which was intended to provide students experience in carefully examining, clarifying, and articulating their own beliefs, strategies, and techniques while understanding others' orientations. However, the small group of four students did not provide ample diversity in orientation to challenge the students. Therefore, this effort will be continued over into the next academic year.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2021-2022, the target was met.

Table 2 AC2021-2022 scores

Psychological Intervention Skills	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Demonstrates knowledge of theories of psychotherapy.	4	.00
Takes a theoretically based approach to working w/clients.	4.33	.57

As seen in Table 2, the students enrolled in PSYC 5270 during the Spring semester received a rating of 4 for demonstrating knowledge of theories of psychotherapy. For the application of this knowledge with clients, the ratings ranged from 4 ($n = 1$) to 5 ($n = 1$), with $M = 4.33$. In terms of the SLO, the objective was met with 100% of the students earning a rating from their supervisor of 3 or higher, consistently meeting high standards.

Decision or Recommendation.

Based on this information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2021-2022 data, the students' efforts to apply theory again exceeded their knowledge. It is not known what opportunities are provided during supervision to demonstrate knowledge and, therefore, if it's an area of improvement for the students or a need for an opportunity in supervision. To provide direction, an advisory board will be formed with the goal for the board to be comprised of at least four supervisors from the various practicum sites. A second goal will be to schedule the meeting in the early part of the Fall 2022 semester to incorporate the information collected from the meeting into the Fall 2022 Practicum I and to make changes in time for Spring 2023 Practicum II.

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These changes will improve the student's ability to know and utilize the theories, techniques, and outcomes of major approaches to psychotherapy, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward for this SLO.

SLO 2. Demonstrate understanding of research, theory, and methods of clinical practice, including assessment, diagnosis, and intervention of normal versus dysfunctional development and psychopathology.

Course Map: PSYC 5300: Intellectual Assessment
PSYC 5320: Personality Assessment
PSYC 5750: Psychopathology
PSYC 5270: Practicum II: Psychotherapy and Intervention

Measure 2.1. (Direct – Knowledge)

The previously mentioned preliminary exam covers the same four areas, including psychopathology, which are covered by the program's comprehensive exams. Coordinating targeted items allows for pre- and post-course assessments. Because this is a preliminary evaluation, no score was expected.

Each student enrolled in PSYC 5750, a required course for Clinical Psychology graduate students, was administered a comprehensive exam as the final evaluation of the course. The exam is composed of questions developed by a faculty member and designed to evaluate the students' knowledge of psychopathology, including its etiology, diagnosis, and treatment. The goal was for at least 80% of students to achieve a composite score of 70% or better. These scores were also compared to the preliminary exam scores with an anticipated positive change.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2020-21, the target was met.

For AC 2020-2021, all seven students (100%) earned at least 70% on the targeted multiple-choice questions. Scores on the pretest ranged from 48 to 88% ($M = 65.14$, $SD = 12.59$). For the targeted items, scores on the comprehensive exam ranged from 76 to 92% ($M = 82.86$, $SD = 5.521$) and were significantly higher than those on the pretest (one-tailed paired t -test, $t_6 = -5.89$, $p = .002$). These results indicated students' knowledge of psychopathology significantly increased from the pre-comp to the comprehensive exam, which is evidence of improvement in the desired direction.

In AC 2021-2022, faculty analyzed pre-comp results to identify areas of weakness and guide instruction during course activities. In general, the review revealed that items requiring knowledge of greater specificity were more difficult for the students. While this is not surprising given that the students took the exam with a general working knowledge retained from their undergraduate course and without the benefit of the class, this

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information was used to implement a review at the end of classes and informally quizzing the students at the start of classes to gauge their retention and to emphasize the level of detailed knowledge required.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to demonstrate competency in knowledge of psychopathology, including its etiology, diagnosis, and treatment. As a result of these changes, in AC 2021-2022, the target was met.

In AC 2021-2022, the target was met.

For AC 2021-2022, the comprehensive exam included 75 multiple-choice questions and two discussion questions. The exam included all 25 items from the pre-test. All seven students (100%) earned at least 70% on the entire exam and the targeted multiple-choice questions. Scores on the pretest ranged from 48 to 84% ($M = 62.29$, $SD = 11.28$). For the targeted items, scores on the comprehensive exam ranged from 76 to 100% ($M = 85.14$, $SD = 8.86$) and were significantly higher than those on the pretest (one-tailed paired t -test, $t_6 = -2.45$, $p = .002$). These results indicated students' knowledge of psychopathology significantly increased from the pre-comp to the comprehensive exam, which is evidence of improvement in the desired direction for the SLO.

Decision or Recommendation.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty implement the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. The weakest performance on the pre-comp and comprehensive exams was on questions regarding diagnosing intellectual disability (0% and 43% accuracy, respectively), so additional class time will be spent in PSYC 5750 on this material, including showing a video of individuals diagnosed with the disorder and the related symptoms.

In addition, students are required to conduct Mental Status Exams (MSE) across multiple courses. Faculty observed limitations among the students in their ability to modify and/or generalize across tasks, including diagnostic interview, assessments, and practicum clinical interviews. Therefore, the graduate faculty created a uniform MSE form to assist the students, but without noticeable change in their performance. Therefore, the graduate faculty will collaboratively present a MSE Workshop early in the fall semester to ensure consistent instruction and then to help them adapt it to the situational task.

Measure 2.2. (Direct – Assessment Skill / Ability)

Students will demonstrate their psychological assessment and diagnostic abilities through formal clinical interviews, mental status examinations, standardized psychological testing administration, scoring, and interpretative evaluation reports they are required to submit for PSYC 5300 and 5320, required assessment courses for Clinical Psychology students. Upon completion of PSYC 5320, the students submit a comprehensive psychological assessment report to evaluate the students' proficiency in performing structured clinical interviews, mental status examination, and psychological test administration, scoring, and interpretation used in professional assessment and

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diagnosis. The goal was for at least 70% of students to score at least 80% on the comprehensive report to demonstrate competency in psychological assessment and diagnostics.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2020-2021, the target was met.

For AC 2020-2021, results of comprehensive psychological assessment report data yielded grades ranging from 84 to 97%, with a mean score of $M = 90$, $SD = 4.59$. Analysis indicated student proficiency in performing structured clinical interviews, mental status examinations, test administration, scoring, and interpretation techniques used in professional assessment and diagnostics. These results supported the presence of above-average skills development in the identified areas. This is the first class to work in the virtual assessment environment due to COVID-19-mandated changes in the administration of psychological assessment instruments. This student cohort not only learned traditional administration techniques but also received added instruction for virtual assessment administration practices. The assessment activities for AC 2020-2021 could not be compared to previous years as the new techniques were not required prior to this academic year. Further analysis of the AC 2020–2021 comprehensive report results indicate the weakest performance area is the overall writing section which includes APA formatting, grammar/sentence structure, and clear flow of information. The previously identified comprehensive report area of weakest performance, integration of conflicting test data, saw significant improvement for AC 2020 – 2021 with an overall mean score of 90%.

Based on information gathered from the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty implemented changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. In addition to utilization of the comprehensive assessment report performance measure and the course modifications based on changing industry standards with the two assessment delivery environments, skills tests were implemented for the AC 2021-2022. These included small exercises to reinforce overall writing utilizing APA format, basic grammar skills, and professional writing techniques. The basic skills demonstrations were accomplished through 10-point skills evaluations given after two targeted in-class discussions during the semester as a modification of the originally proposed 25-point exam.

As a result of these changes, in AC 2021-2022, the target was met.

Results of comprehensive psychological assessment report data for AC 2021-2022 yielded grades ranging from 93 to 96%, with a mean score of $M = 95$, $SD = 1.10$. Analysis indicated above-average student proficiency in performing structured clinical interviews, mental status examinations, test administration, scoring, and interpretation techniques. There was an improvement from the previous AC 2020-2021 comprehensive psychological assessment report grades, which had a $M = 90$. The identified comprehensive report area for improvement focus was the overall writing section which

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included APA formatting, grammar/sentence structure, and clear flow of information saw significant improvement for AC 2021-2022 with an overall mean score of 95%, five points higher than the previous year. Analysis of the AC 2021-2022 comprehensive report results indicated the weakest performance area was *recommendations*. This area included identification of examinee needs directly informed by psychological testing objective data and potential concerns requiring further investigation such as reported medical issues.

Additional course focus on the comprehensive assessment report improvement area included two targeted class discussions with subsequent skills tests. All students earned a 100% score on the skills tests given a week after the specified class discussion, which demonstrated mastery of the material. Additionally, students completed 3 psychological assessment reports and a comprehensive final report which included evaluation of the targeted writing skills domain. Students demonstrated improvement across report assignments, with a mean score of 80% on report 1 and a mean score of 94% on the final report. The goal to facilitate improvement in overall writing techniques by recognizing correct and incorrect use of APA style, grammar, and flow of information was effectively achieved as evaluated by these course activities.

Decision or Recommendation

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2021-2022 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. In the AC 2022–2023, students will continue to receive instruction for the administration of psychological assessment instruments virtually and in person. The course modifications based on changing industry standards will divide the comprehensive report activities equally between virtual and in-person administration. Due to fluctuating circumstances related to COVID-19 and other community challenges such as hurricanes, comprehensive assessments are now effectively administered through a combination of testing platforms/environments in the world of work. Additionally, the need for more education concerning the connection between physical health and psychological well-being as a component of comprehensive psychological evaluation recommendations will be addressed. A pre-test measure administered at the beginning of the semester will identify student knowledge of the impact of physical/medical conditions on psychological well-being. The post-test will be administered again prior to the completion of the comprehensive report. Application of acquired knowledge will be evaluated with this pre/posttest measure. Acquired knowledge application will also be evaluated in the recommendations section of the final comprehensive assessment report.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate understanding of research, theory, and methods of clinical practice, including assessment, diagnosis, and intervention of normal versus dysfunctional development and psychopathology, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Measure 2.3. (Direct – Intervention Skill / Ability)

At the end of the semester, students enrolled in 5270, a required course for Clinical Psychology students, were evaluated by their supervisors on their knowledge and skills

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of treatment planning and choosing and implementing evidence-based interventions to effect change. The goal was for at least 70% of students to be rated satisfactory (3) and demonstrate competency in psychological intervention. The equivalent rating for the newly adopted (2018) evaluation form is a score of 3 (1 = Not Satisfactory, 2 = Needs Improvement, 3 = Satisfactory, and 4 = Superior).

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2020-2021, the target was met.

In addition, in AC 2020-21, the target was modified to 100% of students to be rated satisfactory (3). After all, any student not meeting the minimum of performing satisfactorily is unacceptable. Finally, assessment would include review of individual items rather than only the overall rating to identify specific areas of improvement and strengths.

The supervisor's rating form yielded a mean overall rating $M = 3.17$, $SD = .25$, in the satisfactory range, with a minimum rating of 3 (satisfactory) for 100% of the students. The mean was slightly decreased from previous years, which was expected given our feedback and request of supervisors. The item analysis (Table 3), however, revealed a relative weakness in developing treatment plans and strengths in seeking information and demonstrating knowledge about therapeutic techniques.

Table 3 AC 2020-2021 scores

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Ability to propose & defend treatment plan.	3.33	.52
Seeks information about therapeutic techniques.	3.33	.52
Knowledgeable about therapeutic techniques.	3.33	.52
Overall Rating	3.17	.41

In AC 2021-2022, the instructors of PSYC 5750: Psychopathology and PSYC 5260: Practicum I, prerequisites of PSYC 5270, developed course content and instructional supports for treatment planning. Faculty offered additional instructional resources and materials to include interactive class activities to help students' understanding and skills of treatment planning.

In AC 2021-2022, the target was met.

All seven students (100%) of the students received a minimum rating of three. In addition, while the increase was small, there were increased ratings for this year's practicum cohort across all areas (see Table 4).

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Table 4 AC 2021-2022 scores

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Ability to propose & defend treatment plan.	3.33	.58
Seeks information about therapeutic techniques.	4	0
Knowledgeable about therapeutic techniques.	3.67	.58
Overall Rating	3.67	.58

These changes had a direct impact on the students' ability to demonstrate their knowledge and skills of treatment planning and choosing and implementing evidence-based interventions to effect change.

Decision or Recommendation.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2021-2022 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. Like the evaluation of theories knowledge, it is not known if the supervisors are evaluating the students' knowledge and application of treatment planning or the students' ability to take the initiative in supervision with discussing treatment planning. The language on the survey will be modified to clearly assess students' knowledge and application of treatment planning. In addition, to provide direction, the advisory board will be formed with the goal for the board to be comprised of at least four supervisors from the various practicum sites. A second goal will be to schedule the meeting in the early part of the Fall 2022 semester to incorporate the information collected from the meeting into the Fall 2022 Practicum I and to make changes in time for Spring 2023 Practicum II.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate understanding of research, theory, and methods of clinical practice, including assessment, diagnosis, and intervention of normal versus dysfunctional development and psychopathology, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 3. Students will demonstrate and apply knowledge of experimental design and statistical analysis used to evaluate, plan, and perform psychological research.

Course Map: PSYC 5100: Psychological Research: Statistics
PSYC 5120: Psychological Research: Design
PSYC 5950: Psychological Research: Application

Measure 3.1. (Direct – Knowledge)

The previously mentioned preliminary exam covers the same four areas, including statistics and research design, which are covered by the program's comprehensive exams. This allows for pre- and post-course assessments. Because this is a preliminary evaluation, no particular score was expected.

Each student enrolled in PSYC 5120, a required course for Clinical Psychology graduate students, was administered a comprehensive exam as the final evaluation of

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the course. The exam is composed of questions developed by a faculty member and designed to evaluate the students' knowledge of statistics and research design. The goal was for at least 80% of students to achieve a composite score of 70% or better. These scores were also compared to the preliminary exam scores with an anticipated positive change.

Finding: Target was not met.

Analysis:

In AC 2020-2021, the target was not met.

For AC 2020-2021, the 60-item multiple-choice comprehensive exam included all 25 questions from the pretest. Only half of the students scored 70% or higher on the entire exam; however, the three students scoring between 55 and 67% initially improved to between 88 and 90% on the retest, higher than those who passed on the first try. In addition, in AC 2020-2021, all students gave the correct answer on 26 of 60 items, while in AC 2019-2020, only 16 of 60 items were answered correctly by every student.

Five of six students (83%) scored 70% or better on the questions from the pretest, with a range of 64 to 96% ($M = 80.7\%$, $SD = 10.6\%$).

Scores on the pretest ranged from 36 to 48% ($M = 43.3\%$, $SD = 4.70\%$). For the targeted items, scores on the comprehensive exam were significantly higher than those on the pretest (one-tailed paired t -test, $t = 13.1$, $p < .001$). As a result, in AC 2020-2021 student knowledge of statistics and research methodology clearly increased between the pre-comp to the comprehensive exam. These findings are evidence of improvement in the desired direction for the SLO.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2020-2021 data, faculty implemented the following changes in AC 2021-2022 to drive the cycle of improvement. PSYC 5100 was redesigned to meet two days a week (two 75-minute class periods) as opposed to one day a week (150-minute class periods). The purpose of this change was to reduce the amount of statistical content covered in each class period, allow more time for practice and assessment in applying each technique, and reduce the time between sessions, to improve retention of ideas. This schedule also reduces the potential impact of emergency interruptions in instruction, as happened during AC 2020-2021 due to hurricane and ice storm closures which also coincided with widespread power outages that prevented students from utilizing technology when they were at home and classes were canceled. Also, students who missed class due to illness or quarantine could join class remotely or review recordings of class lectures and instruction and were less likely to miss both class periods in a week.

The data for examples and homework on MANOVA was adjusted to provide more challenging analyses in terms of interpreting the results.

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As a result of these changes, in AC 2021-22, although the target was not met, improvements in student performance were seen.

For AC 2021-2022, all 25 questions from the pretest were included in the comprehensive exam. Five of six students taking both tests (83%) scored 80% or better on the questions from the pretest, with a range of 64 to 92% ($M = 80.7\%$, $SD = 9.3\%$). Scores on the pretest ranged from 32 to 48% ($M = 41.3\%$, $SD = 5.5\%$). For the targeted items, scores on the comprehensive exam were significantly higher than those on the pretest (one-tailed paired t -test, $t_s = 11.8$, $p < .001$). As a result, student knowledge of statistics and research methodology clearly increased, not just statistically but also practically, between the pre-comp to the comprehensive exam.

In terms of the SLO, seven students took the comprehensive exam, with four of them (57%) scoring 70% or better on the entire exam ($M = 72.0\%$, $SD = 10.9\%$); scores ranged from 55.8% to 88.3%. The three students, who scored below 70% initially, scored 95% or higher on the retest.

Decision or Recommendation.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2021-2022 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. In AC 2022-2023, PSYC 5100 will continue to meet two days a week (two 75-minute class periods) as opposed to one day a week (150-minute class periods). The weakest performance on the comprehensive exam was in the section on the ethical treatment of human participants (58.9%), so additional class time will be spent in PSYC 5120 on this material and the due date for the completion of the two CITI training courses will be changed to ensure that students have a good background before we discuss the material.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate and apply knowledge of experimental design, the responsible conduct of research, and statistical analysis used to evaluate, plan, and perform psychological research, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Measure 3.2. (Direct - Knowledge)

At the conclusion of each research project, Paper-in-lieu of thesis or Thesis, thesis advisors scored the project using a rubric that assesses critical thinking and analysis of psychology concepts and literature, development of a research question(s) and hypotheses, appropriateness of the research design and methods, presentation, and interpretation of data in psychological research. The goal was for students to earn an overall rating of at least 80% or rating of 3 on a 4-point Likert scale to demonstrate proficiency.

Finding: Target met.

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Analysis:

In AC 2020-21, the target was not met.

Only one of seven students completed her PIL or thesis by May 2021 and received a score of 88%. While the rating exceeded the 80% cutoff and was not an inflated assessment, only one student completed the research project by the desired date. Among the six remaining students, three other students are on track to complete the research requirement in Summer 2021, soon after the desired completion goal of May, and presented at NSU Research Day. One student left on medical leave while the other two were given alternative assignments to facilitate progress toward the completion of their research project.

The previous changes appear to have had a direct impact on the students' ability to demonstrate understanding and application of key statistical and research concepts. However, the concern is the completion rate.

Using the information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2019-2020 and 2020-2021 data and to drive the cycle of improvement, the graduate faculty reviewed the results from AC 2020-2021 and determined that major advisors needed to increase their level of proactive involvement by offering more encouragement and providing more structure (e.g., meetings, deadlines, etc), to facilitate the research. In addition, the faculty extended the research proposal deadline by a month again to compensate for a number of unforeseen circumstances (i.e., continued COVID-19 disruption and hurricanes).

In AC 2021-2022, the target was met.

The intervention effectively provided structure and increased the number of completed research projects on time – three of four students completed their PIL or thesis by May 2022, with 100% earning a rating of over 80% -- two students completed theses, and one student completed a Paper-in-lieu of thesis (PIL). In addition to this cohort, two students from previous cohorts completed their PIL. For accuracy, the survey results were interpreted using a 4-point Likert scale instead of converting them to percentages. The students (n = 3) who completed a PIL received a mean overall rating of 3.625. Two students completed theses and received a mean overall rating of 3.75. The three students from this year's cohort presented at NSU Research Day, and two presented at the Southwestern Psychological Association Convention. All results are in the desired direction.

Decision or Recommendation.

Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2021-2022 data, faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. In preparation of AC 2022-2023 and with the Provost's approval, the faculty will pilot PSYC 5130, an elective research course, in Summer 2022 with the present cohort in order to impose structure and required timelines to their research proposals. Currently, there are no required courses in the summer that bridge the program's first and second years. The

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intention for the summer was for students to prepare drafts of their research project and pursue concentrations if desired. However, anecdotal data has consistently shown students do not take full advantage of the time for their research proposal without structure to guide productivity. The intention of this class is to address the ongoing challenges of students completing their theses or PIL in a timely manner.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate research knowledge and application in a timely manner, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

SLO 4. Students will demonstrate understanding and application of ethical and professional standards in research and clinical practice.

Course Map: PSYC 6000: Ethics and Professional Conduct
PSYC 5270: Practicum II: Psychological Intervention and Therapy

Measure 4.1. (Direct – knowledge)

On an annual basis, students are administered a preliminary exam during orientation before starting the program to establish a baseline of knowledge. The exam covers the same four areas, including ethics, which are covered by the program's comprehensive exams. This allows for pre- and post-course assessments. Because this is a preliminary evaluation, no score was expected.

Each student enrolled in PSYC 6000, a required course for Clinical Psychology graduate students will be administered a comprehensive exam as the final evaluation of the course. The exam is composed of questions developed by a faculty member and designed to evaluate the students' knowledge and understanding of ethical principles and standards of practice and their ability to practice ethical decision-making skills when presented with an ethical dilemma. The goal was for 90% of enrolled students to achieve a composite score of 70%. These scores were also compared to the preliminary exam scores with an anticipated positive change.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2020-2021 the target was met.

For AC 2020-2021, the target was met. In AC 2020-2021, students achieved pre-comprehensive exam score items with a range of 52 to 80% and $M = 73$, $SD = 5.38$. Analysis of the comprehensive exam score items indicated a range of 76 to 100% and $M = 91$, $SD = 8.77$. The scores were improved from the pre-comprehensive exam to the comprehensive exam in AC 2020-2021. The scores suggest improved student performance and increased knowledge of key concepts. Of importance to note, analysis of pre-comprehensive exam items identified as areas of weakness for this student cohort guided instruction during course activities. Comprehensive exam item analysis of those same items reflected improved overall student knowledge in the weakest areas,

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including related legal concepts such as privilege and confidentiality (pre-comp item target response rate of 33% and comp rate of 100%) and applied knowledge about dual relationships (pre-comp item target response rate of 33% and comp rate of 100%).

Based on experience from AC 2020-21, analysis of pre-comprehensive exam items identified as areas of weaknesses guided instruction during course activities. Faculty also ensured the expanded focus in ethical use of technology in professional practice with revised pre-comp and comp questions specific to telehealth activities and the use of social media. Course instruction also included demonstration-based assignments for student presentation of informed consent procedures virtually and in-person—the goal for 90% of enrolled students to achieve assignment scores of 85%.

In AC 2021-2022 the target was met with the implemented changes.

In AC 2021-2022, students achieved pre-comprehensive exam score items with a range of 44 to 80% and $M = 64$, $SD = 2.72$. Analysis of the comprehensive exam score items indicated a range of 84 to 100% and $M = 92$, $SD = 1.31$. The scores were improved from the pre-comprehensive exam to the comprehensive exam in AC 2021-2022. The scores suggest improved student performance and increased knowledge of key concepts. Of importance to note, analysis of pre-comprehensive exam items identified as areas of weakness for this student cohort guided instruction during course activities. Comprehensive exam item analysis of those same items reflected improved overall student knowledge in the weakest areas, including ethical dilemma resolution with colleagues (pre-comp item target response rate of 29% and comp rate of 100%), related legal concepts such as privilege (pre-comp item target response rate of 14% and comp rate of 86%), bartering with clients (pre-comp item target response rate of 29% and comp rate of 100%), and ethical consideration when clients present gifts (pre-comp item target response rate of 14% and comp rate of 100%). Additional evaluation of student performance on demonstration-based assignments indicates the student performance scores range from 90 – 96% with a $M = 94%$ and $SD = 1.11$. The goal of 90% of students demonstrating proficiency at 85% was met.

These changes had a direct impact on the student's ability to demonstrate understanding and application of ethical and professional standards in research and clinical practice.

Decision or Recommendation:

Based on experience from AC 2021-2022, the improvement resulted from analysis of pre-comprehensive exam items identified as areas of weakness that guided instruction during course activities was effective. This practice will continue as each cohort of students has variable performance levels in these identified areas.

In AC 2022-2023, faculty will ensure the expanded focus in ethical professional practice to technology-specific platform skill sets as these standards continue to evolve particularly in the virtual administration of standardized psychological testing. This will include revision of 20% of pre-comp and comp questions specific to teleassessment standards in the professional practice of psychology. Personal versus professional use of social media platforms will also be included in the item revisions for this generation of students who

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only know a world where social media is *the* primary mode of communication.

Additionally, newly identified concerns regarding the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health emerge as a particular concern for student professional development. The APA Code of Ethics for Professional Practice in Psychology encourages a commitment to self-care as foundational behavior. It is important to include a targeted focus on self-care as the foundation for ethical practice in psychology. Beginning with the 2022-2023 PSYC 6000 course, a new module of the ethical responsibilities for self-care to mediate stress and the potential for burnout will be incorporated as an introduction to ethical practice in psychology. Students will complete a brief knowledge survey of self-care skills, the impact on mental well-being, and how deficits in self-care impact professional performance. A focus on self-care practice will be incorporated across course discussions. At the end of the semester, students will take the knowledge survey to measure self-care knowledge. Students will also identify ways in which they practice self-care activities as a component of their ethical professional development over the course of the semester through a targeted assignment.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate understanding and application of ethical and professional standards in research and clinical practice, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Measure 4.2. (Direct – Skill / Ability)

At the end of the semester, students enrolled in PSYC 5270, a required course for Clinical Psychology students, were evaluated by their supervisors on their knowledge of ethical and professional practice, as well as their demonstration of ethical and professional practice. The goal was for 100% of enrolled students to demonstrate fundamental knowledge by scoring 3 (satisfactory) or higher on the evaluation.

Finding: Target was met.

Analysis:

In AC 2020-21, the target was met.

As can be seen in Table 5, the supervisor's rating form yielded a mean overall rating $M = 3.83$, $SD = .41$, in the superior range, with a minimum rating of 3 (satisfactory) for 100% of the students. In fact, 67% of the students received superior ratings in two other items and 83% in three of the items. Of note, the previously identified relative weakness was maturity, with an overall rating of 2.63. For AC 2020-21, the rating is 3.83, a notable increase.

Table 5 AC 2020-2021 scores

Ethical and Professional Conduct	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Knowledge of ethics.	3.67	.52
Ethical behavior.	3.67	.52
Respect for confidentiality.	3.83	.41

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Maturity	3.83	.41
Cooperation with others.	3.83	.41
Overall Rating	3.83	.41

Based on the data from AC 2020-2021, the faculty modified the evaluation form to include a 5-point scale (1 = Not Satisfactory, 2 = Needs Improvement, 3 = Satisfactory/Consistently Meets Standards, 4 = Consistently Meets High Standards, 5 = Exceeds High Standards) rather than the current 4-point Likert scale to better distinguish performance that meets (minimal) standards from the performance that meets and exceeds high standards.

In Practicum II (PSYC 5270), the Clinical Director presented a formal orientation at the onset of the semester to reinforce previously identified general expectations (e.g., dress code, professional timeliness, professional maturity) and to discuss setting/population-specific expectations. The Clinical Director also engaged students in regular “ethical discussions,” asking students to present for group discussion any ethical dilemmas or potential dilemmas they experienced in practicum. The purpose was for students to discover and explore ethical issues, conduct themselves professionally with appropriate debate decorum, and consider their own values within the ethical framework.

These changes had a direct impact on the student’s ability to demonstrate understanding and application

Table 6 AC 2021-2022 scores

Ethical and Professional Conduct	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Knowledge of ethics.	4	0
Ethical behavior.	3.75	.50
Respect for confidentiality.	4	0
Maturity	3.75	.50
Cooperation with others.	4	0
Overall Rating	3.75	.50

In AC 2021-22, the target was met. The supervisor’s rating form yielded a mean overall mean rating $M = 3.75$, $SD = .50$, in the superior range, with a minimum rating of 3 (satisfactory) for 100% of the students. Moreover, 100% of the students received superior ratings in three of the items. No weaker area was noted.

These changes had a direct impact on the student’s ability to demonstrate understanding and application of ethical and professional standards in research and clinical practice.

Decision or Recommendation.

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Based on information gathered from the analysis of the AC 2021-2022 data, the faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. Faculty will implement the following changes in AC 2022-2023 to drive the cycle of improvement. As opposed to the original plan to modify the assessment to a 5-point Likert scale, this AC converted data analysis to a 4-point Likert scale instead of the percentage assessment. However, the scale still did not make the desired distinction. Therefore, the scale will be modified to include a 5-point scale (1 = Not Satisfactory, 2 = Needs Improvement, 3 = Satisfactory/Consistently Meets Standards, 4 = Consistently Meets High Standards, 5 = Exceeds High Standards). As previously mentioned, an advisory board will be formed with the goal of the board comprised of at least four supervisors from the various practicum sites. A second goal will be to hold the meeting early in the Fall 2022 semester to incorporate the information collected from the meeting into the PSYC 6000 (Ethics) class, if appropriate, and Fall 2022 Practicum I and to make changes in time for Spring 2023 Practicum II.

These changes will improve the student's ability to demonstrate understanding and application of ethical and professional standards in research and clinical practice, thereby continuing to push the cycle of improvement forward.

Comprehensive Summary of Key Evidence of Improvements Based on the Analysis of the Results:

Program faculty made several decisions after examining results of data analysis from AC 2020-2021 which resulted in improved student learning and program improvement in AC 2021-2022.

- While specific actions have been identified for each objective, the graduate faculty continued to host one activity per semester that brought first and second-year graduate students together to foster a culture that recognizes achievement, peer and faculty-student interactions, and healthy communication.
- The Graduate Faculty hosted an end-of-year celebration of completing the first year and for completing all required coursework for the respective cohorts.

SLO 1

- Using survey results, faculty will assign students one of the earlier theories and one of the more current, widely practiced, and empirically supported theoretical orientations to complete two art projects and present a brief description to the class, thereby gaining knowledge of the theories that students must visually represent and clearly articulate to others. Balancing the theories consistently across students will provide a comparison of diverse theories to aid in the professional development of their own theoretical orientation.
- Since the goal is for students to perform better than satisfactorily, the faculty modified the scale to include a 5-point scale (1 = Not Satisfactory, 2 = Needs

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Improvement, 3 = Satisfactory/Consistently Meets Standards, 4 = Consistently Meets High Standards, 5 = Exceeds High Standards) for supervisors to better differentiate between a student's performance that is merely "satisfactory" from a performance that is above average but not superior.

- The faculty evaluated the focus of theory in Practicum I and found it to be more of an informal approach. Therefore, supervisors incorporated Piercy and Sprenkle's (1988) set of theory-building questions throughout the semester during group supervision when students were discussing a client's case conceptualization, treatment plan, and therapeutic techniques. These questions challenged students to explain and justify their therapy strategies and interventions within the context of their theoretical orientation.
- During group supervision, the other students attempted to identify the therapist's theoretical orientation and beliefs, which was intended to provide students experience in carefully examining, clarifying, and articulating their own beliefs, strategies, and techniques while understanding others' orientations. However, the small group of four students did not provide ample diversity in orientation to challenge the students. Therefore, this effort will be continued into the next academic year.

SLO 2

- Faculty analyzed pre-comp results to identify areas of weakness and guide instruction during course activities. In general, the review revealed that items requiring knowledge of greater specificity were more difficult for the students. While this is not surprising given that the students took the exam with a general working knowledge retained from their undergraduate course and without the benefit of the class, this information was used to implement a review at the end of classes and informally quizzing the students at the start of the next class to gauge their retention and to emphasize the level of detailed knowledge required.
- Faculty provided instruction for the administration of psychological assessment instruments by dividing instruction time and performance measures between the two service environments (virtually and in-person) as both are equally utilized in the professional psychology world of work in response to COVID-19 pandemic changes.
- Skills tests were implemented for the AC 2021-2022. These included small exercises to reinforce overall writing utilizing APA format, basic grammar skills, and professional writing techniques. The basic skills demonstrations were accomplished through 10-point skills evaluations given after two targeted in-class discussions during the semester as a modification of the originally proposed 25-point exam.
- Course content and instructional supports for treatment planning were developed or recommended. Faculty offered additional instructional resources and materials, including interactive class activities to help students' understanding and skills of treatment planning.

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SLO 3

- Faculty redesigned PSYC 5100 to meet two days a week (two 75-minute class periods) as opposed to one day a week (150-minute class periods) to improve comprehension.
- Because it was disrupted by Covid-19 the previous year, the faculty resumed with the intended timeline structure of completing subgoals for May 2022 completion of their PIL or Thesis, attention to accuracy in evaluating students' research and statistical knowledge and preparing students to present at NSU Research Day in 2022.

SLO 4

- Analysis of pre-comprehensive exam items identified as areas of weaknesses guided instruction during course activities.
- Faculty ensured the expanded focus in the ethical use of technology in professional practice with revised pre-comp and comp questions specific to telehealth activities and the use of social media.
- Course instruction also included demonstration-based assignments for student presentation of informed consent procedures virtually and in-person—the goal for 90% of enrolled students to achieve assignment scores of 85%.
- Faculty continued to present a practicum orientation to review specific behaviors that differentiated professional immaturity from maturity (e.g., procrastination, critical thinking and decision making, patience, punctuality, and discipline).
- Faculty also engaged students in regular “ethical discussions,” asking students to present for group discussion any ethical dilemmas or potential dilemmas they experienced in practicum. The purpose was for students to discover and explore ethical issues, conduct themselves professionally with appropriate debate decorum, and consider their own values within the ethical framework.

Plan of Action for Moving Forward:

Program faculty examined the evidence and results of data analysis from AC 2021-2022 and will take steps to continue to improve student learning in AC 2022-2023:

SLO 1

- Gestalt Theory continues to be one of the weaker areas identified on the comprehensive exam. With the goal of inspiring greater interest, the instructor will present the more direct approach of the founder of Gestalt theory and current therapists' more collaborative and gentle approach. In addition, one of the Case Conceptualization assignments will require the application of the Gestalt theory.
- It is not known what opportunities are provided during supervision to demonstrate knowledge and, therefore, if it's an area of improvement for the students or a need for an opportunity in supervision. To provide direction, an advisory board will be formed with the goal for the board to be comprised of at least four supervisors

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from the various practicum sites. A second goal will be to schedule the meeting in the early part of the Fall 2022 semester to incorporate the information collected from the meeting into the Fall 2022 Practicum I and to make changes in time for Spring 2023 Practicum II.

SLO 2

- For PSYC 5750, the weakest performance on the pre-comp and comprehensive exams was on questions regarding diagnosing intellectual disability (0% and 43% accuracy, respectively), so additional class time will be spent in PSYC 5750 on this material, including showing a video of individuals diagnosed with the disorder and the related symptoms.
- Students are required to conduct Mental Status Exams (MSE) across multiple courses. Faculty observed limitations among the students in their ability to modify and/or generalize across tasks, including diagnostic interviews, assessments, and practicum clinical interviews. Therefore, the graduate faculty created a uniform MSE form to assist the students, but without a noticeable change in their performance. Therefore, the graduate faculty will collaboratively present an MSE Workshop early in the fall semester to ensure consistent instruction and then to help them adapt it to the situational task.
- Students will continue to receive instruction for the administration of psychological assessment instruments virtually and in person. The course modifications based on changing industry standards will divide the comprehensive report activities equally between virtual and in-person administration. Due to fluctuating circumstances related to COVID-19 and other community challenges such as hurricanes, comprehensive assessments are now effectively administered through a combination of testing platforms/environments in the world of work.
- The need for more education concerning the connection between physical health and psychological well-being as a component of comprehensive psychological evaluation recommendations will be addressed. A pre-test measure administered at the beginning of the semester will identify student knowledge of the impact of physical/medical conditions on psychological well-being. The post-test will be administered again prior to the completion of the comprehensive report. The application of acquired knowledge will be evaluated with this pre/post-test measure. Acquired knowledge application will also be evaluated in the recommendations section of the final comprehensive assessment report.
- Like the evaluation of theories knowledge, it is not known if the supervisors are evaluating the students' knowledge and application of treatment planning or the students' ability to take the initiative in supervision with discussing treatment planning. The language on the survey will be modified to clearly assess students' knowledge and application of treatment planning. In addition, to provide direction, the advisory board will be formed with the goal for the board to be comprised of at least four supervisors from the various practicum sites. A second goal will be to schedule the meeting in the early part of the Fall 2022 semester to incorporate the information collected from the meeting into the Fall 2022 Practicum I and to make changes in time for Spring 2023 Practicum II.

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SLO 3

- PSYC 5100 will continue to meet two days a week (two 75-minute class periods) as opposed to one day a week (150-minute class periods). The weakest performance on the comprehensive exam was in the section on the ethical treatment of human participants (58.9%), so additional class time will be spent in PSYC 5120 on this material and the due date for the completion of the two CITI training courses will be changed to ensure that students have a good background before we discuss the material.
- In preparation of AC 2022-2023 and with the Provost's approval, the faculty will pilot PSYC 5130, an elective research course, in Summer 2022 with the present cohort to impose structure and required timelines to their research proposals in an effort to address the ongoing challenges of students completing their theses or PIL in a timely manner.

SLO 4

- Faculty will ensure the expanded focus of ethical professional practice to technology-specific platform skill sets as these standards continue to evolve, particularly in the virtual administration of standardized psychological testing. This will include revision of 20% of pre-comp and comp questions specific to teleassessment standards in the professional practice of psychology. Personal versus professional use of social media platforms will also be included in the item revisions for this generation of students who only know a world where social media is *the* primary mode of communication.
- Newly identified concerns regarding the long-term effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on mental health emerge as a particular concern for student professional development. The APA Code of Ethics for Professional Practice in Psychology encourages a commitment to self-care as foundational behavior. It is important to include a targeted focus on self-care as the foundation for ethical practice in psychology. Beginning with the 2022-2023 PSYC 6000 course, a new module of the ethical responsibilities for self-care to mediate stress and the potential for burnout will be incorporated as an introduction to ethical practice in psychology. Students will complete a brief knowledge survey of self-care skills, the impact on mental well-being, and how deficits in self-care impact professional performance. A focus on self-care practice will be incorporated across course discussions. At the end of the semester, students will take the knowledge survey to measure self-care knowledge. Students will also identify ways in which they practice self-care activities as a component of their ethical professional development over the course of the semester through a targeted assignment.
- Faculty will modify the evaluation form to include a 5-point scale (1 = Not Satisfactory, 2 = Needs Improvement, 3 = Satisfactory/Consistently Meets Standards, 4 = Consistently Meets High Standards, 5 = Exceeds High Standards) rather than the current 4-point Likert scale to better distinguish performance that meets (minimal) standards from the performance that meets and exceeds high

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standards.

- As previously mentioned, an advisory board will be formed with the goal of the board comprised of at least four supervisors from the various practicum sites. A second goal will be to hold the meeting early in the Fall 2022 semester to incorporate the information collected from the meeting into the PSYC 6000 (Ethics) class, if appropriate, and Fall 2022 Practicum I and to make changes in time for Spring 2023 Practicum II.
- While it is not specifically associated with one of the SLOs, the goal of the program is to prepare students for the pursuit of doctoral degrees or employment. Therefore, the curriculum will be evaluated considering recent changes in licensing requirements across multiple states. Most states require the requisites to be met through their master's degree prior to graduating. Therefore, changes will be considered to include possibly adding a licensure track of an additional 18 credit hours.