### Program Mission Statement

From your Program Assessment Plan (Statement should articulate the unit/program mission in support of the institutional mission and include a clearly defined purpose appropriate to collegiate education.)

The primary mission of the USC Upstate psychology department is to promote the metropolitan mission of the university. The program provides quality baccalaureate education in the basic areas of psychology. The psychology curriculum is designed to meet the educational needs of students who are diverse in background, race, ethnicity, age, educational experience, and career goals. The department strives to prepare students to function successfully in a diverse, global society.

### Goal 1

From your Program Assessment Plan (Describe broad learning outcomes and concepts (what you want students to learn) expressed in general terms (clear communication, problem-solving skills, etc). Goals should focus on discipline-specific outcomes relevant to the program.)

Goal 1: Knowledge base of psychology: The student will demonstrate familiarity with the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, and empirical findings of psychology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Objectives SLO's (student learning outcomes)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

| From your Program Assessment Plan (Describes the specific skills, values and attitudes students should be able to exhibit that reflect the broader goals. Objectives (student learning outcomes) transform the general program goals into specific student performance/behaviors that demonstrate student learning and skill development along these goals.) |

1.1 The student should be able to identify theory and major research findings in the natural science areas of psychology.

1.2 The student should be able to identify theory and major research findings in the social science areas of psychology.

### Assessment Methods

From your Program Assessment Plan (Describes the measure(s) by which the department will know the students are meeting the departmental learning objectives. Includes both direct and indirect assessment. Each SLO should have at least one assessment method.)

1.1 Major Field Test (ETS); Psychology Major Survey

1.2 Major Field Test (ETS); Psychology Major Survey
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Assessment Criteria</th>
<th>Level of achievement you are targeting (Indicate benchmarks, scores on assessment instruments, etc... that would indicate acceptable achievement under your plan)</th>
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</thead>
</table>
| 1.1                 | Scoring at or above national average on Major Field Test on natural science subscales of Psychology Major Field Test  
Average ratings of 4 or higher (on a seven point Likert-type scale with 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree) on questions related to their abilities to identify theory and major research findings in natural science areas of psychology |
| 1.2                 | Scoring at or above national average on Major Field Test on social science subscales of Psychology Major Field Test  
Average ratings of 4 or higher (on a seven point Likert-type scale with 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree) on questions related to their abilities to identify theory and major research findings in social science areas of psychology |
1.1

**Major Field Test:**
Our students averaged 54 (SD=12.31) and 52.72 (SD=14.55) on the two natural science subscales of Major Field Test compared to national averages of 56 and 56.8, respectively. Our students scored safely within one standard deviation of the national average on both tests. In addition, both of these scores are higher than last year’s scores on the respective subscales (52.06, 48.59).

**Psychology Major Survey:**
Average rating of 5.06 (compared to last year’s 5.17) for ability to identify major theory and research findings from natural science areas of Psychology.

1.2

**Major Field Test:**
Our students scored 51.26 (SD=14) and 51.26 (SD=13.45) on social science subscales of Major Field Test compared to national averages of 56.08 and 56.68 and last year’s averages of 50.65 and 48.53. Once again, our students were within one standard deviation of the national average on both tests and showed improvement in both areas relative to last year. Table 1 provides scores on all MFT subtests over the past three assessment periods.

**Table 1: Major Field Test Results Over Time**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Subtest</th>
<th>2007-8</th>
<th>2008-9</th>
<th>2009-10</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Learning and Cognition</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>52.06</td>
<td>54</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sensation, Perception, Physiology</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>48.59</td>
<td>52.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clinical, Abnormal, Personality</td>
<td>53</td>
<td>50.68</td>
<td>51.26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Developmental and Social</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>48.53</td>
<td>51.26</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Psychology Major Survey:**
Average rating of 5.69 (compared to last year’s 5.63) for ability to identify major theory and research from social science areas of Psychology.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Action Plan</th>
<th>What actions or modifications have been or will be made based on this assessment?</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Overall, we were pleased with our students’ performance on the MFT in 2009-10 and with their self-assessments in the relevant content areas. These data indicate that our students are meeting our knowledge base goals, and the improvement relative to 2009-9 is very encouraging. Despite this, we plan to evaluate our degree requirements in an attempt to determine ways in which we can encourage a more comprehensive education (in terms of breadth and depth) within the discipline. Early suggestions would be to require more natural science psychology courses and incorporate an additional laboratory-based course in the standard curriculum. In addition, the department plans to investigate an alternate form of assessment for the knowledge base (aside from the MFT). It is our feeling that this exam does not truly reflect our mission as a department, and that perhaps an instrument of our own devising might be a more appropriate indicator of our success in educating our students. We plan to weigh the pros and cons of this strategy and report back to the Program Assessment Committee with our resolution.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Implementation and Evaluation of Previous Years’ “Action Plan”</th>
<th>How was the action plan identified in the previous year’s report implemented this year, and what was the impact?</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>The curricular modifications relevant to subscores 2 and 4 seem to have worked, as both areas showed marked improvement (nearly a third of a standard deviation unit in the case of subscore 4).</td>
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<tr>
<td>Component</td>
<td>Description</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal 2</td>
<td>From your Program Assessment Plan (Describe broad learning outcomes and concepts (what you want students to learn) expressed in general terms (clear communication, problem-solving skills, etc). Goals should focus on discipline-specific outcomes relevant to the program.)</td>
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<td>Objectives</td>
<td>From your Program Assessment Plan (Describes the specific skills, values and attitudes students should be able to exhibit that reflect the broader goals. Objectives (student learning outcomes) transform the general program goals into specific student performance/behaviors that demonstrate student learning and skill development along these goals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SLO's</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td>Assessment</td>
<td>From your Program Assessment Plan (Describes the measure(s) by which the department will know the students are meeting the departmental learning objectives. Includes both direct and indirect assessment. Each SLO should have at least one assessment method.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Methods</td>
<td>2.1 Course embedded questions in SPSY 325. Major Field Test Psychology Major Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.2 SPSY 325 papers evaluated by rubrics Senior seminar paper evaluated by rubrics Psychology Major Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2.3 SPSY 325 final paper Senior seminar paper Psychology Major Survey</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assessment Criteria</td>
<td>Level of achievement you are targeting (Indicate benchmarks, scores on assessment instruments, etc… that would indicate acceptable achievement under your plan)</td>
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<td>---------------------</td>
<td>--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| 2.1                 | Seventy percent or above correct on common questions  
|                     | At or above national average for Assessment Indicator for measurement and Methodology on the Psychology Major Field Test.  
|                     | Average rating of 4 or higher (on seven point Likert-type scale, with 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree) with questions relating to 1) familiarity with scientific method, 2) opportunities for reading and critically evaluating research in psychology, 3) familiarity with research strategies, 4) locating empirical research articles, 5) interpreting empirical research articles, and 6) designing basic studies. |
| 2.2                 | Seventy percent of the literature review portion of sampled SPSY 325 papers rated as satisfactory or above  
|                     | Seventy percent of the literature review portion of the sampled Senior Seminar papers rates as satisfactory or above  
|                     | Average rating of 4 or higher (on a Likert-type scale, with 1=strongly disagree and 7=strongly agree) with questions relating to their ability 1) locate research, 2) interpret research, and 3) come up with research questions |
| 2.3                 | Seventy percent or above on the methods portion of the sampled SPSY 325 papers rated as satisfactory or above  
|                     | Seventy percent or above on the methods portion of the sampled Senior Seminar papers rated as satisfactory or above  
|                     | Average rating of 4 or higher (on seven point Likert-type scale, with 1= strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree) with questions relating to their ability to design basic research studies |
Course Embedded questions:
Our students averaged 74.9% correct responses on course embedded questions as opposed to 68.2% in 2008-9.

Major Field Test:
Our students average on the assessment indicator for measurement and methodology of the Psychology Major Field Test was 51.2% correct (2008-9: 49.2%) compared to a national average of 53.2% correct. Our score is well within one standard deviation (9.4 for this particular indicator in the comparison population) of the national average.

Psychology Major Survey:
Psychology Major Survey Average response (for items delineated above, previous year’s scores in parentheses):
1) 6.5 (6.31)
2) 6.42 (6.08)
3) 5.69 (5.67)
4) 6.37 (6.17)
5) 5.87 (5.73)
6) 5.92 (5.56)

2.2

Literature Review Portion of SPSY 325 Papers:
100 percent of the literature review portion of the 325 papers rated as satisfactory or above. The average rating (converting the rubric responses to numerical format so that Unsatisfactory = 1, Satisfactory = 2, Good = 3, and Excellent = 4) was a 2.75 (last year = 2.75) out of 4.

Literature Review Portion of Senior Seminar Papers:
100 percent of the literature review portion of the senior seminar papers were rated as satisfactory or above. The average rating was a 3.1 (last year = 2.5), representing a marked improvement.

Psychology Major Survey:
Psychology Major Survey Average Response (for items delineated above)
1) 6.37 (6.17)
2) 5.87 (5.73)
3) 5.98 (5.73)

2.3

Methods Portion of SPSY 325 Papers:
100 percent of the method portions of the 325 papers were rated as satisfactory or above. The average rating was a 2.65 (last year = 2.73).

Methods Portion of Senior Seminar Papers:
100 percent of the method portions of the senior seminar papers were rated as satisfactory or above. The average rating was a 3.35 (last year = 2.65), again demonstrating significant improvement.

Psychology Major Survey:
Psychology Major Survey Average Response for item relating to ability to design basic research studies was 5.98 (2008-9: 5.56).
## Action Plan

What actions or modifications have been or will be made based on this assessment?

Overall, we are quite pleased with our student’s performance. Our students are consistently meeting benchmarks; and therefore, we are congratulating our faculty on a job well done. The objective increases in performance were matched by increases in our students’ subjective evaluations of their own performance, indicating that not only are our students generally improving, but they are indeed aware of this fact. We were particularly encouraged by the improved performance on the senior seminar literature review and methods writing sections. We hope to encourage similar improvements in research methods by modifying existing writing assignments in all 300-level courses to enhance components pertaining to either a) research methodology or b) research scholarship.

## Implementation and Evaluation of Previous Years’ “Action Plan”

How was the action plan identified in the previous year’s report implemented this year, and what was the impact?

The primary concern from 2008-9 was the performance on the “testable hypothesis” item in the common questions indicator. We modified the response format and placed extra emphasis on the topic in the course and are happy to report that the percentage of students responding correctly on that item rose from 40% to 80%.
<table>
<thead>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Goal 3</strong></td>
<td>From your Program Assessment Plan (Describe broad learning outcomes and concepts (what you want students to learn) expressed in general terms (clear communication, problem-solving skills, etc). Goals should focus on discipline-specific outcomes relevant to the program.)</td>
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**Communication Skills in Psychology:** The student will demonstrate the ability to communicate psychological material effectively in writing.

3.1 The student should be able to synthesize appropriate information from a variety of psychological sources and develop a well-organized, logical presentation of that material.

3.2 The student should be able to demonstrate effective writing skills by using professional writing conventions (e.g. grammar, audience awareness, and APA guidelines) to present psychological material.

3.1 SPSY 325 and 325 L: Research Methods for Psychology and lab final paper evaluated by rubrics
   Senior seminar paper evaluated by rubrics
   Psychology Major Survey

3.2 SPSY 325 and 325 L: Research Methods for Psychology and lab final paper evaluated by rubrics
   Senior seminar paper evaluated by rubrics
   Psychology Major Survey
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</table>
|                     | 3.1
|                     | Seventy percent or above of overall writing skills on the SPSY 325 Paper rated as satisfactory or higher
|                     | Seventy percent or above of overall writing skills on the Senior seminar paper rated as satisfactory or higher
|                     | An average rating of 4 or higher on Psychology Major Survey (on a seven point Likert-type scale, with 1=strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree) items relating to their ability to synthesize information and present it in a logical manner.
|                     | 3.2
|                     | Seventy percent or above of APA formatting on the SPSY 325 paper rated as satisfactory or above
|                     | Seventy percent or above of the APA formatting on the Senior Seminar paper rated as satisfactory or above
|                     | An average rating of 4 or higher on Psychology Major Survey (on a seven point Likert-type scale, with 1=strongly disagree and 7= strongly agree) items relating to their ability to use APA formatting. |
### Assessment Results

**Actual results and data collected** (Make sure to break down data by subgroups (e.g. other campuses or emphases). As appropriate, also include item or category analysis.)

| 3.1 | SPSY 325 Papers:  
100 percent of our students’ papers were rated as satisfactory or higher with regards to overall writing skills. The average rating was 2.72 (last year = 2.83).  
Senior Seminar Papers:  
100 percent of our students’ papers were rated as satisfactory or higher with regards to overall writing skills. The average rating was 2.82 (last year = 2.48).  
Psychology Major Survey:  
Psychology Major Survey response for items relating to their ability to synthesize information and make logical arguments was 5.58 (2008-9: 5.56). |
| 3.2 | SPSY 325 Papers:  
100 percent of our students’ papers were rated as satisfactory or higher with regards to proper APA formatting. The average rating was 3.08 (last year = 3.01).  
Senior Seminar Papers:  
100 percent of our students’ papers were rated as satisfactory or higher with regards to proper APA formatting. The average rating was 2.95 (last year = 2.84).  
Psychology Major Survey:  
Psychology Major Survey average response for items relating to their ability to use APA formatting was 5.88 (2008-9: 5.85). |

### Action Plan

**What actions or modifications have been or will be made based on this assessment?**

Once again, we are quite pleased with our students’ performance. Our students are consistently meeting departmental benchmarks; and therefore, we are congratulating our faculty on a job well done. We would like to see our students improve their overall writing ability at both levels (325 and Senior Seminar), and we hope to foster this improvement via the incorporation of more technical writing throughout the program. Thus, the action plan for Goal 2 applies to Goal 3 as well. One early example is the modification of a paper assignment in Psychology of Personality. The faculty member is attempting to shift the assignment from one that involved introspection to one that involves gathering, interpreting, and reporting on data.
### Implementation and Evaluation of Previous Years’ “Action Plan”

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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>We made no significant alterations relevant to this goal in 2009-10, and thus we cannot evaluate the effects thereof.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>