Producing Work Ready Psychology Graduates

Renae Hayward, Dr Rob Ranzijn, Cathy Balfour, Dr Janet Bryan
University of South Australia

Background

➢ The majority of 3 year graduates from Psychology programs do not go on to become psychologists.

(Cranney et al., 2009)

➢ These graduates need to be work ready and to have considered alternative career pathways.

(Bridstock, 2009)

➢ In today’s work environment successful employees need to be:
  ➢ Mobile
  ➢ Adaptable
  ➢ Flexible
  ➢ Resourceful

(Arnold et al., 2005)
Research Question

- What skills, knowledge, and attributes do our Bachelor of Psychological Science graduates need in order to be work ready?

Research Focus

- Developing a list of program level learning objectives:
  - sequential and cumulative development
  - flexible, capable, and resourceful graduates

Theory & Research

Work Readiness and Employability

Learning Theory

Graduate Attributes

Program Learning Objectives
Method

APAC Graduate Attributes

GA 1) Knowledge and understanding of psychology
GA 2) Research methods in psychology
GA 3) Critical thinking skills in psychology
GA 4) Values in psychology
GA 5) Communication skills in psychology
GA 6) Learning and the application of psychology

(Cranney et al., 2009)

Method

➢ Content Analysis

➢ UniSA Graduate Qualities

➢ Employer feedback/ expectations

(Schilling, 2006)

(UniSA, n.d.)

(DEST, 2006; UniSA, 2009)
Method

➢ Project team review & feedback

➢ Teaching and Learning Forum presentation and discussion

Results

APAC Graduate Attributes 6 & 4
- Reflection
- Self awareness
- Self awareness
- Personal development
- Life long learning
- Integrity
- Recognise limitations

UniSA Graduate Qualities 2 & 4
- Weaknesses/ Strengths
- Learning styles
- Responsibility for learning
- Sustaining Intellectual interest
- Self directed
- Integrity
- Recognise limitations
- Flexibility/ adaptability

PO1. Personal and professional learning and critical reflection.

A Psychology graduate of UniSA will understand and commit to lifelong learning and critical self reflection, both personally and professionally.
PO2. Knowledge, understanding, and application of psychology.

A Psychology graduate of UniSA will understand and apply the major concepts, theoretical perspectives, empirical findings, and historical trends in the core topics of psychology to a variety of contexts (individual, organisational, and social).

PO 3. Research methods in psychology.

A Psychology graduate of UniSA will understand, apply, conduct, and evaluate basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis and interpretation, and the appropriate use of technologies.
PO 4. Critical thinking and problem solving skills.

A Psychology graduate of UniSA will respect and use critical and creative thinking, sceptical inquiry, and the scientific approach to solve problems related to a range of issues, including behaviour and mental processes.

PO 5. Values and cultural perspectives in psychology

A Psychology graduate of UniSA will value empirical evidence; tolerate ambiguity during the search for greater understanding of behaviour and knowledge structures; commit to and perform in an ethically, professionally, and socially responsible way; understand the complexity of indigenous, sociocultural and international diversity and issues; and reflect other values that underpin the discipline of psychology.
PO 6. Communication skills in psychology.

A Psychology graduate of UniSA will communicate effectively in a variety of formats; in a variety of contexts; as a leader and effective team member; in professional practice and as a member of the community.

Course Mapping

1) Initial mapping of core courses against Program Objectives
   - Reviewed Course Information Booklets & course webpages (lectures, tutorial material, assessment documents)

2) Interviewed core course co-ordinators
   - Fit between assessments/ learning activities/ learning objectives and each program objective

3) Final mapping of each course ➔ compiled yearly maps.
## Program Objectives

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Program Objectives</th>
<th>Objectives</th>
<th>Assessments</th>
<th>Learning Activities</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PO1: Personal and professional learning and critical reflection.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO2: Knowledge, understanding and application of psychology.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO3: Research methods in psychology.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO4: Critical thinking and problem solving skills.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO5: Values and cultural perspectives in psychology.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO6: Communication skills in psychology.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

## Course Mapping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PO1</th>
<th>Remember</th>
<th>Understand</th>
<th>Apply</th>
<th>Analyse</th>
<th>Evaluate</th>
<th>Create</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PO4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Course Mapping

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>POS</th>
<th>Remember</th>
<th>Understand</th>
<th>Apply</th>
<th>Analyse</th>
<th>Evaluate</th>
<th>Create</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Oral discussion with tutorial/ practicals/ lectures.*

### Mapping Results

- Appropriate 1st & 2nd year sequencing
- 3rd year courses should focus on Applying ➔ Creating
- More focus needed on
  - Critical self reflection
  - Oral communication
  - Group work and interpersonal skills
  - Written skills for different formats and contexts
  - Leadership skills
Current & Future Directions

Enhanced psychology program:

- Mandatory 1st year course
- Self reflection and employability skills
- Linked to e-portfolio
- 3rd year placement course
- Counselling stream offered & recognised by CASA
- Ongoing discussion with multidisciplinary teams

Questions


