

Principles for Quality Undergraduate Education in Psychology

FEBRUARY 2023



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ASSOCIATION

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Principles for Quality Undergraduate Education in Psychology

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APA Board of Educational Affairs Working Group to Revise the APA Principles for Quality Undergraduate Education in Psychology

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
Introduction	2
Description of the Revision Process	3
Quality Principles and Recommendations	5
Quality Principle and Recommendations for Faculty Members	6
Quality Principle and Recommendations for Psychology Programs and Departments	9
Conclusion	12
References	13
Appendix A: List of Quality Principles and Recommendations	14

Executive Summary

The American Psychological Association (APA) promotes excellence in psychology education for undergraduate students through the development of principles¹ and guidelines that faculty members, programs, and departments can use to design a quality curricular experience. The overarching goal is to support educators in developing psychologically literate citizens who can apply the principles of psychological science across career paths and in their everyday lives.

The current document delineates a set of principles and recommendations for quality education in psychology. We recognize that *quality* is a broad concept that can be operationally defined in multiple ways. For the purpose of the current document, we define quality education as practices that faculty members, programs, and departments can adopt to facilitate student learning and development in ways that fit their specific institutional needs and missions. The practices we describe are informed by integration of available research (e.g., scholarship of teaching and learning), diverse educator experience and APA educational policy (e.g., [Role of Psychology and APA in Dismantling Systemic Racism Against People of Color in U.S.](#), [APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major](#), the [Resolution on Promoting Global Perspectives in U.S. Psychology](#)).

The *Principles for Quality Undergraduate Education in Psychology* is designed to complement, and to be used in conjunction with, the *APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major*. Whereas *Guidelines* describe a set of curricular goals, student learning outcomes, and foundation and baccalaureate indicators of learning progress, the *Quality Principles* define the actions that faculty members, programs, and departments can take, and the ongoing practices they can adopt, to create a high-quality, stimulating, and inclusive learning environment designed to maximize student learning and professional development.

Although there have been considerable growth and changes in the field of psychology, the higher education landscape, the job market, and our global society since *Principles for Quality Undergraduate Education in Psychology* were adopted as policy by the APA Council of Representatives in 2011, many of the fundamental components that define a quality education remain unchanged. The goal of this revision was to build on the strong foundation of the original document, to be responsive to feedback from educators regarding the usability and value of the *Quality Principles*, and to update the document so that it reflects current knowledge and best practices. Finally, although the *Quality Principles* are designed to be aspirational rather than prescriptive, this revision focused on creating recommendations that interested faculty members, programs, and departments should be able to adopt across a range of institutional settings.

¹In the context of this document, the term principles may be interpreted the same way as the term guidelines, which is used to describe recommendations that are aspirational in intent as provided in APA Association Rule 30-8.1.

Introduction

History of Principles for Quality Undergraduate Education in Psychology

The previous version of the *Principles for Quality Undergraduate Education in Psychology*, approved as APA policy by the APA Council of Representatives in February 2011, was developed by the Board of Educational Affairs (BEA) Steering Committee for the 2008 APA National Conference on Undergraduate Education in Psychology, held in Tacoma, WA. Participants at the 2008 conference articulated a number of recommendations for enhancing the teaching and learning of undergraduate psychology. These principles were patterned after the *Principles for Quality Undergraduate Psychology Programs*, adopted by APA in 1994 and archived in February 2011. They were also informed by several related documents focused on quality improvement in psychology education, such as the *National Standards for High School Psychology Curricula* (APA, 2005) and the *APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major* (APA, 2007). The steering committee comprised:

Diane F. Halpern, *Claremont McKenna College, Conference Chair*
Barry Anton, *University of Puget Sound, APA Board of Directors Liaison*
Bernard C. Beins, *Ithaca College*
Charlie T. Blair-Broeker, *Cedar Falls High School*
Charles L. Brewer, *Furman University, APA Board of Educational Affairs Liaison*
William Buskist, *Auburn University*
Bettina J. Casad, *California Polytechnic Institute, Pomona*
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Yolanda Y. Harper, *The University of Memphis*
Mary E. Kite, *Ball State University*
Patricia Puccio, *College of DuPage*
Courtney A. Rocheleau, *Appalachian State University*

To ensure that this policy remained a “living document,” the *Principles for Quality Undergraduate Education in Psychology* were initially scheduled to expire 10 years from the date of their adoption, in February 2021. This is consistent with provisions of APA Association Rule 30-8.3, requiring cyclical review of approved standards and guidelines within periods not to exceed 10 years. However, due to delays related to the global pandemic, the Policy and Planning Board granted an extension, such that the 2011 guidelines were set to expire in February 2023.

Working Group Selection

A call for nominations to serve on the *Principles for Quality Undergraduate Education in Psychology* working group was circulated in 2021. Members of the APA Committee on Associate and Baccalaureate Education (CABE) prepared a slate of candidates for BEA approval and made a recommendation regarding the chair. Member selection was focused on providing a balance of representation across experience, personal identity characteristics, and type of institution (community college vs. 4-year college or university).

Description of the Revision Process

Overview of the Process

Before their first meeting, the working group invited educators and department heads to submit feedback on the 2011 *Quality Principles*. At their first meeting in August 2021, they reviewed and discussed this feedback and generated a list of resources (see the list below) that they deemed important to review before initiating revisions. The working group met virtually each month between August 2021 and March 2022. Between meetings, working group members reviewed resource documents, worked in pairs to suggest revisions, and reviewed working drafts of the document.

Following legal review and BEA approval, a 60-day public comment period was held in the spring/summer of 2022 and the *Quality Principles* working group reviewed all submitted comments and made additional changes to the draft document as appropriate. In August 2022, the *Quality Principles* working group provided the revised policy document to the Office of the General Counsel for a second legal review, which was followed by a second 60-day public comment period. Again, the *Quality Principles* working group reviewed and discussed all submitted feedback and final revisions were completed. After the Office of the General Counsel completed a final review, BEA reviewed and approved sending the *Quality Principles* to the APA Board of Directors and Council of Representatives. Following review by the APA Board of Directors in December 2022, the APA Council of Representatives approved the revision of the *Quality Principles* in February 2023.

Resources

The working group consulted several APA resources on undergraduate education in their revision of the *APA Principles for Quality Undergraduate Education in Psychology* including the *APA Principles for Quality Undergraduate Psychology Programs* (Adopted by APA in 1994, archived in 2011, published in McGovern & Reich, 1996), the *APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major* (APA, 2013), the *APA Guide to College Teaching: Essential Tools and Techniques Based on Psychological Science* (APA, 2020), *Strengthening the Common Core of the Introductory Psychology Course* (APA, 2014), and the *Assessment of Outcomes of the Introductory Course in Psychology* (APA Working Group on Introductory Psychology Assessment, 2017). The working group also drew from the *APA Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Framework* (APA, 2021a) and *Role of Psychology and APA in Dismantling Systemic Racism Against People of Color in U.S.* (APA, 2021b).

The working group also reviewed quality principles, guidelines, and curriculum standards from other STEM and related disciplines including the *American Chemical Society Guidelines for Bachelor's Degree Programs* (ACS, 2015), *Characteristics of Exemplary Life Science Teaching* (National Association of Biology Teachers, 2012), *Undergraduate Guidelines Workgroup Curriculum Guidelines for Undergraduate Programs in Statistical Science* (American Statistical Association, 2014), the *Committee on the Undergraduate Program in Mathematics Curriculum Guide to Majors in the Mathematical Sciences* (Math Association of America, 2015) and *The*

Sociology Major in the Changing Landscape of Higher Education: Curriculum, Careers, and Online Learning (Pike et al., 2017).

Principles Guiding the Revision Process

Several guiding principles informed the revisions made to this document. First and foremost, the working group wanted the document to provide added value to psychology faculty members, programs, and departments engaged in undergraduate education over and above what is provided by the *APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major* (APA, 2013). As noted in the *Executive Summary*, whereas *Guidelines* focus on curriculum goals, student learning outcomes, and indicators, the *Quality Principles* describe the essential elements of a quality learning environment. However, the feedback the working group received from faculty members and department heads suggested some challenges in integrating these two documents. Thus, one goal of the revision process was to directly address these challenges.

Second, the working group wanted to create a policy document characterized by clear recommendations that psychology faculty members, programs, and departments could enact across a range of institutional contexts. Multiple intersecting forces can impact the quality of a learning experience, from individual students' historical and current contexts to broader societal views about the value of education and psychology. Therefore, for this revision, the working group focused on identifying principles that could govern the specific actions that psychology faculty members, programs, and departments can take at a local level to deliver a quality psychology education.

Revisions were also guided by the principle that psychology education should be responsive to ongoing research that advances disciplinary knowledge and informs best practices in teaching and learning. Additionally, increased recognition of the ways in which systemic oppression has harmed people and communities of color informed the working group's focus on dismantling racism and other forms of discrimination and bias in psychology education. Finally, informed by [*APA's Resolution on Promoting Global Perspectives in U.S. Psychology*](#) (APA, 2017b), the document acknowledges the importance of promoting a globally focused curriculum.

Summary of Changes

The 2011 version of the *Principles for Quality Undergraduate Education in Psychology* identified five overarching principles of a quality education that included responsibilities of (1) students, (2) faculty members, (3) psychology departments and programs, (4) administrators, and (5) policy makers and the general public. Specific recommendations were

generated for each principle, yielding a total of 30 recommendations.

In this 2023 revision, although the document acknowledges the broader ecological framework that influences educational quality, the principles and recommendations were narrowed to focus primarily on the responsibilities that faculty members, psychology programs, and departments have in creating a quality education. This choice was informed by the desire to create a practical guide with actionable items that educators could adopt across institutional contexts.

Revisions were also focused on removing redundancies between the *Quality Principles* and *Guidelines*. For example, several recommendations from the 2011 version focused on knowledge and skills that faculty should teach and/or students should learn or develop (e.g., psychological literacy, time management skills, communication skills, use of feedback to improve performance, working with diverse perspectives and viewpoints). Instead of retaining these items that represented a subset of the educational goals and student learning outcomes described in *Guidelines*, the *Quality Principles* now make specific reference to how *Guidelines* can be used to create a coherent and consistent curriculum.

The final *Quality Principles* document consists of two overarching principles and 15 recommendations.

Quality Principles and Recommendations

The following principles and recommendations are designed to describe best practices that **faculty members, programs, and departments** can adopt to facilitate student learning and development in psychological science, in ways that best fit their specific institutional needs and missions. This document is designed to complement, and to be used in conjunction with, the *APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major*. Whereas *Guidelines* describe a set of curricular goals, student learning outcomes, and foundation and baccalaureate indicators of learning progress, the *Quality Principles* define the actions that faculty members, programs, and departments can take, and the ongoing practices they can adopt, to create a high-quality, stimulating, and inclusive learning environment designed to maximize student learning and professional development.

Although this document defines quality principles and offers recommendations specifically for faculty members, psychology programs, and psychology departments, it is essential to acknowledge that multiple, intersecting forces outside of these domains impact the quality of undergraduate learning. At the person level, learning outcomes are dependent on students' readiness and willingness to learn that are influenced by a variety of historical and current contextual factors. Institutional policies and resource allocation significantly influence the environment in which faculty members, programs, and departments operate. Moreover, at the very broadest level, the public's perception of psychology, the value society places on education, and the actions of policymakers all affect education quality. Through their multiple roles as scientists, educators, health service providers, and consultants, psychologists have the expertise to demonstrate the value of psychology as a discipline grounded in science with the potential to solve society's biggest challenges and improve people's lives.

Quality Principle and Recommendations for Faculty Members

Quality Principle 1

Faculty members strive to be ethical (APA, 2017a), culturally responsive scientist-educators who use their educational background, ongoing professional development, pedagogical expertise, and lived experience to teach, mentor, and support students with diverse and intersecting identities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Faculty members recognize that they must have the current and relevant expertise needed to teach in their content area.**

Consistent with the APA Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct (APA, 2017a), educators teach within the boundaries of their competence. Although faculty members most often teach in areas consistent with their educational background and training, they may also develop expertise through ongoing professional development and research.

Faculty are intentional about incorporating diversity, science, and a global perspective into their courses. They engage in ongoing professional development that promotes equity, diversity, fairness, and inclusion in their course policies and content.

- 2. Faculty members understand and apply evidence-based learning principles and help students develop an understanding of the science of learning that students can apply to their own lives.**

Faculty members recognize and correct any biases or misconceptions they have about how learning occurs, draw on the current literature on the science of learning to inform their teaching, and employ methods that promote deep understanding and long-lasting knowledge. Faculty members also recognize the limitations of the science of learning, including the lack of diversity in this body of research.

Faculty members are aware of new technologies that help students successfully achieve learning outcomes, especially those that become widely adopted. Understanding how a specific technological teaching tool draws on scientific principles of learning may help faculty members make informed decisions about whether to adopt them.

Finally, faculty members recognize and correct misconceptions that students commonly hold about how learning occurs and support student learning practices that are evidence-based.

3. Faculty members seek to create accessible, inclusive, and flexible curriculum that aims to address the expected variability among learners and contexts.

Faculty members are intentional in selecting modes of teaching and delivery that will maximize learning for students with a diverse range of abilities and enable an inclusive learning environment. Working with disability advocacy offices will help faculty members use modes of teaching and delivery that meet not only the letter of the law, but also its spirit.

4. Faculty members engage in continuous assessment of the success of their instruction and use that information to refine instructional practices to enhance student success.

Faculty members engage in ongoing evaluation of the extent to which students are achieving defined student learning outcomes or course objectives and determine if current teaching practices are effective and equitable. Additionally, faculty members actively seek, and are responsive to, formative and summative feedback on all facets of their teaching, including course policies and content, teaching and evaluation strategies, pace, and climate.

The methods and sources (e.g., student, peer) that faculty members use to evaluate their instruction and collect feedback are guided by available data and best practices.

Faculty members seek mentorship and professional development opportunities to identify and implement effective teaching practices.

Faculty members also collect summative feedback from students, reflect on that feedback, and make changes to course design and teaching practices, when appropriate. Faculty consider collecting formative feedback (e.g., midsemester) and make incremental adjustments as needed.

Faculty members engage in ongoing professional development to enhance their learning about equity, diversity, fairness, and inclusion as they relate to instructional practices to enhance student success.

5. Faculty members recognize the long history of discriminatory policies and practices embedded in higher education; engage in sustained efforts to dismantle these oppressive systems; and actively promote fairness, equity, diversity, and inclusion in their teaching practices.

Faculty members work to create an inclusive learning environment in their classrooms and ensure that their teaching methods and course policies are equitable, fair, culturally relevant and accessible.

Faculty members engage in the systematic review of instructional materials to identify and acknowledge psychology's historical role in perpetuating racism and prejudice and discrimination related to other identity characteristics. They strive for a diverse representation in the theorists and researchers whose work they draw from in their teaching and recognize the role of intersecting social identities and impact of institutionalized oppression/power dynamics on identity groups, when discussing course material. Faculty members also demonstrate how psychology and psychological science can be, and has been, used to address and combat racism and the related psychological consequences, appropriately crediting scholars and practitioners of color engaged in this work.

Faculty members recognize that the body of knowledge frequently represented in course materials disproportionately reflects research conducted with Western, educated, industrialized, rich, and democratic (WEIRD) populations (Henrich et al., 2010) that may also exclude other historically underrepresented groups, acknowledge those limitations, and strive to represent global perspectives in their curriculum.

Using instructional materials and methods that are accessible to all learners is another essential component of inclusive teaching. Barriers to access may include differences in abilities and socioeconomic status, as well as technological inequities (i.e., differences among students in their experience with technology and access to high-speed internet and reliable devices). Faculty members strive to ensure that all students have access to the course materials and technology required for their class.

6. Faculty members provide support and guidance to students.

Although faculty responsibilities may vary considerably within and across institutions (e.g., advising responsibilities; expectations about office hours), all faculty members are accessible to the students they teach. Faculty members also strive to cultivate psychological safety in their faculty-student relationships.

When requiring students to use course technology, faculty members provide the instruction and support students need, which may include guiding students toward appropriate institutional resources.

Faculty members are also encouraged to support students in their career aspirations and professional development. When faculty members do not have the professional experience or expertise to advise students about how to prepare for and enter the workforce immediately after graduation, they are encouraged to refer students to campus faculty and staff members who have professional training in this area. Faculty members recognize that minoritized students who hold oppressed identities may need enhanced support given the multiple barriers to learning and advancement in higher education spaces they often face. Faculty members seek to use cultural humility and awareness in an effort to tailor support and guidance to meet students' unique needs, minimize barriers, and provide equitable access to support.

Quality Principle and Recommendations for Psychology Programs and Departments

Quality Principle 2

Psychology departments and programs design their curriculum, offer cocurricular activities, and create learning environments that will adequately prepare students to achieve the knowledge and skills expected of undergraduates engaged in the study of psychology.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1. Psychology departments and programs provide a coherent globally informed curriculum with learning goals and outcomes informed by APA's policy documents on undergraduate education.**

Programs offer an introductory course in psychology that provides an overview of the core content areas of the discipline (e.g., biological, cognitive, developmental, social and personality, and mental and physical health), emphasizes how scientific inquiry serves as a foundation for all content, describes the different contexts in which psychological science is applied (e.g., occupational, educational, and legal settings), and highlights cross-content integrative themes (APA, 2021c). The curriculum is also designed to prepare students to achieve the foundation- and baccalaureate-level knowledge and skills delineated in the *APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major*. Although these policy documents provide guidance regarding the student learning outcomes psychology majors are expected to achieve, psychology departments and programs are encouraged to engage in curriculum planning that also reflects program and institutional missions.

Programs and departments learn from APA's resolutions on the ways in which the field of psychology can work toward dismantling systemic racism against people of color in U.S. educational contexts, including teaching about psychology's historical role in promoting, perpetuating, and failing to challenge racism (APA, 2021b), and promote global perspectives in psychology education (APA, 2017b). Programs and departments support the adoption of coursework, textbooks, and supplementary resources that provide culturally responsive paradigms for understanding psychology, emphasize the impacts of structural racism, and highlight the contributions of minoritized psychologists, including those living outside of the United States.

- 2. Courses are sequenced in ways that allow upper division courses to build on concepts that are introduced in lower division courses.**

Students who gain foundational knowledge and develop basic skills before being exposed to more advanced concepts are more prepared to deeply

engage with complex material and effectively respond to challenges. Thus, students may benefit from taking coursework in scientific methods early in the curriculum so that they can use the concepts and skills acquired in these courses to evaluate the material more critically in advanced coursework.

A quality curriculum in undergraduate education culminates with a capstone experience designed to encourage students to reflect on and integrate the knowledge and skills they have acquired as a psychology major.

3. Psychology departments and programs recognize that their faculty must be sufficient in size and expertise to teach the depth and breadth of courses needed for students to achieve expected learning goals and outcomes.

Psychology departments and programs have sufficient faculty to support students in attaining the knowledge and skills expected of undergraduate psychology majors as defined by the *APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major*. To the degree possible, faculty expertise reflects the curricular diversity of the discipline. Psychology departments and programs also leverage community resources to provide diversity of perspectives, experiences, and identities to complement faculty expertise.

4. Psychology departments and programs develop policies and procedures that support quality teaching.

Psychology departments and programs aim to ensure that all faculty, including adjunct faculty members and graduate students, have adequate preparation and supervision to serve in their roles. All faculty members also have the opportunity to engage in professional development and continuing education to stay abreast of advances in teaching pedagogy and strategy.

Psychology departments and programs support ongoing assessment of faculty teaching effectiveness and encourage changes and innovations that may improve student learning outcomes. Psychology departments and programs recognize and consider demonstrated biases in student evaluations of teaching related to irrelevant criteria including gender, racialized identity, and course subject. Finally, psychology departments and programs strive to balance the demands on faculty so that faculty members have sufficient resources to devote to quality teaching. They develop policies and practices aimed at preventing educator burnout, increasing well-being, and supporting self-care. Service assignments are fairly and equitably distributed.

5. Psychology departments and programs provide experiential learning opportunities and support student involvement in cocurricular activities.

Student learning is reinforced and enhanced through activities that require the application of knowledge and skills to “real-world” challenges and contexts. Moreover, cocurricular activities may enrich student learning and facilitate the development of essential skills such as leadership, collaboration, community engagement, communication, interpersonal skills, and time management.

Psychology departments and programs provide opportunities for students to participate in research activities, attend colloquia, attend and present at local, regional or national conferences, engage in service-learning opportunities, and complete internships. Psychology departments and programs are also encouraged to develop and support social and academic groups, clubs, and honor societies that allow students to engage more deeply with the discipline. Students are also provided with the flexibility to take advantage of institution-level activities that enrich learning, such as study-abroad and leadership development programs.

Psychology departments and programs are intentional and explicit in building community partnerships where the quality of experiential learning programs/trainings will promote the values of the home program and provide psychologically safe and fully accessible experiential learning opportunities. Finally, events that promote positive climate, such as gatherings that welcome new students or celebrate student success (e.g., graduation ceremonies), are highly encouraged.

6. Psychology departments and programs promote equity, diversity, and inclusion and engage in efforts to dismantle systemic oppression and reduce educational inequities.

Psychology departments and programs engage in systematic, coherent, and ongoing efforts to recruit and retain faculty members and students with diverse and intersecting identities. Departments and programs also work collaboratively, with student input and feedback, to develop policies and practices aimed at dismantling racism and other systemic forces of oppression while creating a safe and inclusive learning environment where individuals are free from harassment and discrimination. Psychology departments and programs also provide, and communicate to students, the ways in which students may raise concerns and file complaints.

Psychology departments and programs offer evidence-based training and professional development opportunities to raise awareness of and mitigate against, biases that negatively affect learning among students of color and students from other marginalized communities. Ongoing training and professional development are also essential to retain and promote the success of faculty from marginalized communities.

7. Psychology departments and programs provide the advising and mentorship psychology majors need to pursue academic and career goals.

Providing a high-quality education in psychology through attentive, personalized advising and mentorship may help to attract a talented and diverse workforce into the discipline. Psychology departments foster opportunities for mentoring networks or other resources that work to provide adequate representation of psychologists with intersecting identities.

However, it is equally, if not more, important for psychology departments and programs to provide advising and mentorship to the large percentage of psychology majors who do not pursue graduate education in psychology.

Psychology departments and programs provide students with a developmentally sequenced plan that includes the advising, coursework, and resources they need to reflect on their interests and strengths, identify possible career paths, and select courses, areas of focus or minors, and engage in cocurricular activities that will prepare them for career success. This may include specific courses aimed at promoting career engagement or graduate study.

Despite the high value employers across a range of sectors place on the knowledge and skills students develop in undergraduate psychology programs, students often need assistance in identifying and marketing these attributes. Faculty members, psychology departments, and programs are encouraged to explicitly identify the skills students are expected to acquire through specific assignments and curricular activities to increase students' awareness of their skill development (Naufel et al., 2018).

8. Psychology departments and programs engage in a periodic practice of program review aimed at ensuring that students are achieving expected learning outcomes.

The primary role of a department or program in psychological science is to ensure that faculty are engaged in sound teaching practices that reflect the discipline of psychology. To fully realize this goal, departments periodically engage in a review of their practices and resources. Departments evaluate their effectiveness in achieving expected student learning outcomes, infusing diversity, science and a global perspective into the curriculum, promoting an inclusive and equitable environment, and helping students to achieve their educational and career goals postgraduation. Student feedback and input is an essential component of this process.

9. Psychology departments and programs foster positive relationships with other institutions to support educational and career pathways for students.

Building strong, collaborative relationships across institutions of learning (among high schools, community colleges, and 4-year institutions) that promote access and support student advancement is an essential step toward diversifying the pathway into psychology. Curriculum alignment, and faculty-informed articulation agreements² between 2- and 4-year institutions, may boost student retention and promote academic success.

Cultivating partnerships with community organizations and local employers can result in rich applied learning opportunities that may promote a range of the desired student learning outcomes outlined in the *APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major* (e.g., gain experience and develop skills in activities that strengthen preparation for job entry or graduate school admission, participate in activities that promote civic, social, and/or global outcomes that benefit communities).

²Articulation agreements specify the courses completed at a community college that will be considered for acceptance at the bachelor's degree level, as well the standard of performance (e.g., grade) that must be met in order for the credits to be accepted (U.S. Department of Education, 2008).

Conclusion

These principles offer recommendations that faculty members, programs, and departments may use to create a high-quality, stimulating, and inclusive learning environment. Within this context, students will be able to achieve the curricular goals, student learning outcomes, and foundation and baccalaureate indicators of learning progress delineated in the *APA Guidelines for the Undergraduate Psychology Major*. Taken together, the Quality Principles and Undergraduate Guidelines are designed to support educators promoting “the advancement, communication, and application of psychological science and knowledge to benefit society and improve lives” (APA, 2019).

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List of Quality Principles and Recommendations

Quality Principle and Recommendations for Faculty Members

Quality Principle 1

Faculty members strive to be ethical (APA, 2017), culturally responsive scientist-educators who use their educational background, ongoing professional development, pedagogical expertise, and lived experience to teach, mentor, and support students with diverse and intersecting identities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Faculty members recognize that they must have the current and relevant expertise needed to teach in their content area.
2. Faculty members understand and apply evidence-based learning principles and help students develop an understanding of the science of learning that students can apply to their own lives.
3. Faculty members seek to create accessible, inclusive, and flexible curriculum that aims to address the expected variability among learners and contexts.
4. Faculty members engage in continuous assessment of the success of their instruction and use that information to refine instructional practices to enhance student success.
5. Faculty members recognize the long history of discriminatory policies and practices embedded in higher education, engage in sustained efforts to dismantle these oppressive systems, and actively promote fairness, equity, diversity, and inclusion in their teaching practices.
6. Faculty members provide support and guidance to students.

Quality Principle and Recommendations for Psychology Programs and Departments

Quality Principle 2

Psychology departments and programs design their curriculum, offer cocurricular activities, and create learning environments that will adequately prepare students to achieve the knowledge and skills expected of undergraduates engaged in the study of psychology.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. Psychology departments and programs provide a coherent globally informed curriculum with learning goals and outcomes informed by APA's policy documents on undergraduate education.
2. Courses are sequenced in ways that allow upper division courses to build on concepts that are introduced in lower division courses.
3. Psychology departments and programs recognize that their faculty must be sufficient in size and expertise to teach the depth and breadth of courses needed for students to achieve expected learning goals and outcomes.
4. Psychology departments and programs develop policies and procedures that support quality teaching.
5. Psychology departments and programs provide experiential learning opportunities and support student involvement in cocurricular activities.
6. Psychology departments and programs promote equity, diversity, and inclusion and engage in efforts to dismantle systemic oppression and reduce educational inequities.
7. Psychology departments and programs provide the advising and mentorship psychology majors need to pursue academic and career goals.
8. Psychology departments and programs engage in a periodic practice of program review aimed at ensuring that students are achieving expected learning outcomes.
9. Psychology departments and programs foster positive relationships with other institutions to support educational and career pathways for students.



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