

**STUDENT LEARNING ASSESSMENT REPORT (2019-2020)**

**PROGRAM: Forensic and Legal Psychology**

**SUBMITTED BY: Drs. Holly Hargreaves-Cormany, Mary Lindahl, and Jason Doll**

**DATE: September 30, 2020**

**Executive Summary**

This program provides graduates with the skills and knowledge they need to provide effective, high-quality services in a variety of forensic and legal settings. These include probation and parole, victim assistance, mitigation and sentencing advocacy, law enforcement, intelligence, trial consultation, policy, advocacy, and research. To accomplish this goal, the program balances traditional psychological knowledge and skills with a specialized understanding of the legal system.

List *all* of the program's learning outcomes, as of the assessment year's catalog: *(regardless of whether or not they are being assessed this year)*

Learning Outcome	Year of Last Assessment	Assessed This Year (Y=Yes)	Year of Next Planned Assessment
Research and write critically about issues in forensic and legal psychology.	2018-19		2020-21
Develop and deliver effective oral presentations on topics in forensic and legal psychology.	2018-19		2020-21
Argue the strengths and weaknesses of policy issues relevant to the field of forensic and legal psychology.	2019-20	Y	2021-22
Propose and evaluate solutions to major problems in the legal system.	2018-19		2020-21
Identify strategies to appropriately address ethical dilemmas in the field.	2019-20	Y	2021-22

Provide a brief description of the assessment process used including how results are shared and discussed and strengths, challenges, and planned improvements to the process, providing evidence of a culture of continuous improvement based on assessment. If there is something that is impeding your ability to implement improvements, please comment on those issues *(generally not more than two paragraphs, may use bullet points)*:

The Department of Forensic and Legal Psychology continues to meet the University's mission of academic excellence (intellectual curiosity) via all of the learning outcomes that were assessed in AY 2019-20. We are committed to continuing to provide our students with the highest quality educational experience possible within our program and we value the importance of analyzing objective data within our annual assessment in order

to continue to improve our outstanding program which has an excellent reputation within our field and is consistently recognized as one of the best national programs for Forensic and Legal Psychology. The learning outcomes assessed in 2019-20 emphasize the importance of arguing the strengths and weaknesses of policy issues as well as addressing issues of ethical dilemmas within the field. Given the careers that our graduates pursue, the ability to analyze information effectively to support a well-reasoned conclusion is vital to their success in the program, as well as in the field.

The department meets during each semester to discuss the assessment report and the plan for the next year. An effort is made to include outcome measures from a variety of sources and classes. The Department is fostering a culture of continuous improvement based on assessment by holding ongoing discussions of our strategic plan, the development of assignments and outcome measures for each year’s plan, and paying close attention to student feedback in the classroom and end-of-course evaluations. We store all data in excel files on Box and include the most recent research within our courses. We plan to implement continued improvement in our assessment report as well as in the curricular development within our program by incorporating training from experts in our field presented at the 2020 American Psychological Association Convention as well as presentations by experts in our field who reside in the Washington, D.C. Metropolitan region that serve as guest lecturers in our classes and speakers at department events. In addition, faculty members possess an extremely high level of expertise, enabling them to teach complex material to Forensic and Legal Psychology students.

**Closing the Loop: Progress on Planned Improvements from Prior Year**

Describe how the program implemented its planned improvements from last year:

Outcome	Planned Improvement	Update
<p><b>Learning Outcome 1: Research and write critically about issues in forensic and legal psychology.</b></p> <p><b>Direct: Final written analysis/ conclusion of guilt or innocence</b>            This outcome is based on an assignment in the class, FLP 520 Wrongful Convictions: Individual Case Analysis. It is co-taught by Dr. Mary Lindahl and Police Chief Charles Penn, Arlington County Police Department. The class has been conducted as a week-long summer class for the past 12 years. It provides students the opportunity to examine an actual, current case of possible wrongful conviction for homicide, using state-of- the-art research and investigative techniques. Our clients have been serving life imprisonment sentences or are on death row. . .</p>	<p>The committee noted that we did not assess the research component of the outcome. The research in this course follows the dictionary definition of the word as “the systematic investigation into and study of materials and sources in order to establish facts and reach new conclusions.” Thus the entire content of the course can properly be referred to as research, whereby students analyze a legal case by reading all of the police investigation, witness statements, legal motions, and transcript evidence, and then write</p>	<p>We have changed the course from a one-week summer intensive to a Fall semester course. This gives us much more time to train the students in the techniques of analysis for this type of case. The training includes additional reading, weekly classes where the case is analytically broken down, guest speakers, and drafts of the final paper.</p> <p>All these updates have been implemented for Fall 2020.</p>

<p>With the help of law enforcement experts, the students examine the crime scene, the prosecution and defense arguments, witness testimony, police conduct, and the psychological status of the convicted individual. . .</p> <p>At the end of the class, students provide a written analysis of the case, which is provided to the client’s attorneys. . .</p> <p>To date two of the clients have been exonerated and released from prison.</p>	<p>their own analysis of whether the client is factually innocent or not.</p> <p>We have made many changes to this course (see update).</p>	
<p><b>Learning Outcome 2: Develop and deliver effective oral presentations on topics in forensic and legal psychology.</b></p> <p><b>Direct:</b> In FLP 511 (Legal and Investigative Psychology), students, in groups of 3-4, are to create and deliver an effective oral presentation to their classmates and the instructor. The students are graded individually on the assignment.</p> <p>Approximately 87% of the students met the standard, which was: “80% of students to earn 17/20 points or greater on the assignment.” The standard was met.</p> <p><b>Indirect:</b> Spring 2019 Graduating Student Survey question: “Please indicate how well you believe your education prepared you to deliver a coherent oral presentation?” Responses are given on a 5 point scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent).</p> <p>Approximately 86% of graduating students met the standard, which was: “80% of the students will respond good (4) or excellent (5).” The standard was met.</p> <p><b>Indirect:</b> Fall 2018 Alumni Survey question: “Please indicate how well you believe your education prepared you to deliver a coherent oral presentation?” Responses are given on a 5 point scale from 1 (poor) to 5 (excellent).</p>	<p>Taking into account the results of the Alumni Survey, it was decided that the oral communication expectations needed to be made more explicit for students. In addition, more guidance and assistance was to be provided to students to improve their oral communication/presentation skills. Furthermore, a more explicit and detailed oral presentation rubric was to be created and disseminated to students early on each semester.</p>	<p>For AY 19-20, the instructor for FLP 511 provided students with more information regarding the oral communication expectations and a rubric was disseminated to students earlier in the semester. However, the instructor identified that a more detailed and explicit grading rubric needs to be provided to students. This will occur during the 20-21 AY.</p>

<p>Approximately 77% of alums met the standard, which was: “80% of the students will respond good (4) or excellent (5).” The standard wasn’t met.</p>		
<p><b>Learning Outcome 3: Propose and evaluate solutions to major problems in the legal system.</b></p> <p>FLP 566: The assessment activity for this learning outcome has 2-parts. Part 1 is a “Cultural Self-Study,” based on the work of Robert Weigl, clinical psychologist and cultural anthropologist. The methodology is described in his article, “Intercultural competence through cultural self-study: A strategy for adult learners in the <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2009.04.004">International Journal of Intercultural Relations, Volume 33, Issue 4</a>, July 2009, Pages 346-360, <a href="https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2009.04.004">https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ijintrel.2009.04.004</a></p> <p>The cultural self-study has been used for several years as a requirement for members of the U.S. Coast Guard before deployments.</p> <p>FLP 566, Child Victimization, is taught by Dr. Lindahl. It is a service-learning class involving academic study as well as 20 hours of tutoring by students of young refugee children, many of whom are part of a special immigration program. This program is designed to protect families of citizens of Mideast countries who were embedded with American troops in dangerous areas who have experienced or are experiencing an ongoing serious threat because of that involvement. Many of the children we tutor are part of the Special Immigrant Visa program for Iraq and Afghanistan, while other children in the tutoring program are from similarly dangerous countries (e.g., Syria, South Sudan, Somali, and the Democratic Republic of Congo). The program is federally funded and run by Catholic Charities of Arlington, Virginia.</p>	<p>Part 1: The Cultural Self-Study (CSS) has proven to be very popular with the students who report that they have learned a great deal about their own internalized culture. In most cases, they have involved their families in the collection of information.</p> <p>Part 2: It was planned that the students would keep a structured journal where their entries would relate various aspects of the CSS to their observations and reporting of incidents in their tutoring experience.</p>	<p>The students had completed their CSS, but unfortunately, at the advent of the coronavirus early in the course where the students had only 2-3 tutoring sessions, Catholic Charities, which runs the tutoring program, shut down the tutoring until the safety of the students and the children could be assured.</p> <p>Catholic Charities is working with us so that in the Spring semester, the students can either be tutored in person or remotely. In the meantime, we will be working on the assignment. The instructor is also researching the literature for a measure of cultural sensitivity. According to researchers at the present time, most of the literature comes out of the nursing profession and relates to sensitivity to racial and ethnic understanding of the patients.</p>

<p>The purpose of the Cultural Self-Study is to investigate and describe the student's own internalized culture. The students write the study using a "tightly structured protocol" whereby they begin to "comprehend the power of culture as a way, both cognitively and emotionally, of how they are vehicles through which culture is expressed" (Weigl, 346-347). The goal is to stimulate intercultural sensitivity in the students, to foster the interest and skills in understanding unfamiliar cultures, thus increasing empathy in their attitudes towards them.</p> <p>The anticipated ultimate outcome for the students will be improved cultural sensitivity and competence conceptualized as "a positive emotion towards understanding and appreciating cultural differences that promotes appropriate and effective behavior in intercultural communication" (<a href="#">Chen &amp; Starosta, 1997; p. 5</a>).</p> <p>Currently, the intercultural literature generally begins with methods to improve one's understandings of other cultures rather than examining one's own first.</p>		
--	--	--

**Provide a response to last year's University Assessment Committee review of the program's learning assessment report:**

I. Executive Summary

Comment: "Data are currently stored on faculty computers. University Policy is that official documents should be stored in Box"

Response: All data is now stored in Box

II. Implemented Improvements from Previous Year

Comment: "Department did not submit any evidence of how improvements were implemented...the committee would like a better explanation of why assessing ethics was not a priority in this program.

Response: Assessment of ethics is of paramount importance to our program as demonstrated in the outcomes assessed and curricular improvements suggested in this current (2019-2020) Student Learning Assessment Report. The assessment of ethics in the 2018-2019 was not explicitly discussed due to the fact that it was not an outcome focused upon in last year's Student Learning Assessment Report (2018-2019) as we planned to expound upon it in great detail in this year's Student Learning Assessment Report (as discussed in Learning Outcome 1 in the Outcomes Assessment Section below).

### III. Outcomes

Comment: "This is a double-pronged outcome. Research and Writing. The program needs to be sure that it assesses each of these to provide a conclusion about student attainment of the outcome."

Response: Please see the "Closing the Loop" Chart above for a detailed response.

### IV. Assessment Measures and Targets

Comment: "Not clear how research is evaluated according to the Rubric in Appendix A. The rubric needs to be revised to better reflect the learning outcome. It looks like the program is asking students to critically analyze research or evidence rather than conducting the research themselves. You might want to re-think that outcome to reflect this or change the rubric or assignment. The planned improvements mention developing a more effective rubric, working with students on analysis and also changing the timing of the course. We endorse these planned improvements and look forward to your revision. As mentioned above, for Outcome 3. The indirect measures looking at active learning needs to be made more explicit how active learning and service learning relate to this outcome. The interpretation of the results indicates a revision of the self-study to include a more sensitive instrument. The UAC would appreciate an explanation of why this revision was necessary in the next report."

Response: Please see the "Closing the Loop" Chart above for a detailed response.

### V. Analysis of Results and Implications

Comment: "Analysis of results is uneven. There are places where events are restated but not necessarily analyzed. The UAC needs to see details of how you are using analysis of results for the effective improvement of the program."

Response: Please see the "Closing the Loop" Chart above for a detailed response.

### VI. Use of Assessment to Improve Effectiveness

Comment: "Seems cursory. Outcome 2: Good planned improvements. UAC would like to see evidence of a more robust culture of continuous improvement."

Response: Please see the "Closing the Loop" Chart above for a detailed response.

Other Comments: "You have a strong program with highly committed faculty, but this process needs some attention paid. How do you ensure that your students continue to have strong outcomes from the program and challenge yourself to maintain high standards for student performance?"

Response: Please see the "Closing the Loop" Chart above for a detailed response.

**Outcomes Assessment 2019-2020**

**Learning Outcome 1: Identify Strategies to Appropriately Address Ethical Dilemmas within the Field**

<p>Outcome Measures <i>Explain how student learning will be measured and indicate whether it is direct or indirect.</i></p>	<p>Performance Standard <i>Define the acceptable level of student performance.</i></p>	<p>Data Collection <i>Discuss the process for collecting this data: who conducted the assessment, when, and how?</i></p>	<p>Result <i>Did you meet your target? What was the result?</i></p>															
<p><u>Direct:</u> What percentage of students within the FLP 540- Forensic Assessment course could effectively identify ethical dilemmas faced by psychologists conducting forensic assessments or engaging in professional practice within the field for forensic psychologists as evidenced by a score of 18/20 on the FLP 540- Forensic Assessment Course Term Paper Rubric Item which reads as follows: “Clear identification of Ethical Topic presented and specific ethical issues related to topic presented”</p>	<p>The standard requires 90% of the students to earn 18 out of 20 points using the grading rubric.</p> <p>See Appendix A for assignment and Rubric</p>	<p>The population for this outcome measure consists of 15 graduate students in the Forensic and Legal Psychology Program enrolled in the required course, Forensic Assessment in the Summer 2020 Semester</p>	<p>Results of the assessed were:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1450 548 1952 797"> <thead> <tr> <th>Score</th> <th># of Students</th> <th>% of Students</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>20</td> <td>9</td> <td>60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>19</td> <td>1</td> <td>6.66%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18</td> <td>4</td> <td>26.60%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16</td> <td>1</td> <td>6.60%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Percent meeting the standard was 93%. Thus, the standard was met.</p>	Score	# of Students	% of Students	20	9	60%	19	1	6.66%	18	4	26.60%	16	1	6.60%
Score	# of Students	% of Students																
20	9	60%																
19	1	6.66%																
18	4	26.60%																
16	1	6.60%																
<p><u>Direct:</u> What percentage of students within the FLP 540- Forensic Assessment course could effectively evaluate how forensic psychologists/evaluators should address ethical issues using the American Psychological Association (APA) Conduct and Specialty Guidelines and discuss future considerations overlooked by the current body of research as evidenced by a score of 18 out of 20 points on the FLP 540-</p>	<p>The standard requires 90% of the students to earn 18 out of 20 points using the grading rubric.</p> <p>See Appendix A for assignment and Rubric</p>	<p>The population for this outcome measure consists of 15 graduate students in the Forensic and Legal Psychology Program enrolled in the required course, Forensic Assessment in the Summer 2020 Semester</p>	<p>Results of the assessed were:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1450 1047 1952 1295"> <thead> <tr> <th>Score</th> <th># of Students</th> <th>% of Students</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>14</td> <td>2</td> <td>13.30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>15</td> <td>2</td> <td>13.30%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>18.5</td> <td>2</td> <td>13.3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20</td> <td>9</td> <td>60.00%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> <p>Percent meeting the standard was 73%. Thus, the standard was not met.</p>	Score	# of Students	% of Students	14	2	13.30%	15	2	13.30%	18.5	2	13.3	20	9	60.00%
Score	# of Students	% of Students																
14	2	13.30%																
15	2	13.30%																
18.5	2	13.3																
20	9	60.00%																

<p>Forensic Assessment Course Term Paper Rubric Items which reads as follows: “How should evaluators address the ethical issues using APA Conduct and Specialty Guidelines? (i.e. Competence, Relationships, Informed Consent, etc.) and Discuss future considerations overlooked by current body of Research (i.e. Given the review of literature, in the future, evaluators should seek to explore ___ factors when involved in the evaluation of child custody)”</p>			
---	--	--	--

**Interpretation of Results**

Analysis and Implications: *What does this result tell you about the extent to which your students achieved this outcome? What are the strengths and weaknesses that this result highlights, and what are the implications for your curriculum or your program?*

We are pleased that the standard for the first component of the assessment of Learning Outcome 1: Identify Strategies to Appropriately Address Ethical Dilemmas within the Field, was met as evidenced by 93% of our students obtaining a score of at least 18 out of 20 points on the FLP 540- Forensic Assessment Course Term Paper Rubric Item which reads as follows: “Clear identification of Ethical Topic presented and specific ethical issues related to topic presented”. To assess the aforementioned direct outcome measure, students were assigned to effectively identify ethical dilemmas faced by Psychologists conducting Forensic Assessments or engaging in professional practice within the field for Forensic Psychologists. We believe this demonstrates that our students have sufficient knowledge and understanding of ethical dilemmas faced by professionals within our field. However, we were disappointed that our students were unable to expand upon this understanding of ethical dilemmas faced by professionals in the field through meeting our required standard in the second component of our assessment of Learning Outcome 1: Identify Strategies to Appropriately Address Ethical Dilemmas within the Field by demonstrating that they can also effectively evaluate how Forensic Psychologists/Evaluators should address ethical issues using the American Psychological Association (APA) Conduct and Specialty Guidelines and discuss future considerations overlooked by the current body of research as evidenced by obtaining a score of 18 out of 20 points on the FLP 540- Forensic Assessment Course Term Paper Rubric Items which read as follows: “ How should evaluators address the ethical issues using APA Conduct and Specialty Guidelines? (i.e. Competence, Relationships, Informed Consent, etc.) and discuss future considerations overlooked by current body of Research (i.e. Given the review of literature, in the future, evaluators should seek to explore \_\_\_ factors when involved in the evaluation of child custody)”.



Program Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement- *relative to assessment of outcome*

We will continue to assign this Term Paper in the FLP 540- Forensic Assessment course as we believe our program does an outstanding job of teaching students meaningful information that can be applied to work they will do in the field however we will make a concerted effort moving forward to set aside a class each semester devoted to discussion of ethical dilemmas and how to effectively address ethical dilemmas in forensic psychology through the use of case studies as an interactive experiential learning opportunity (please see proposed curricular improvements below).

Discuss planned curricular or program improvements for this year based on assessment of outcome: This year we plan to incorporate training for our students on best practices in the ethical practice of forensic psychology by using case studies from trainings given by experts on ethical issues in Forensic Psychology at the 2020 American Psychological Association (APA) Conference. Case studies will include discussion of ethical issues and principles in the newly revised APA Ethics Code as well as focus on common ethical dilemmas faced by forensic psychologists illustrated through the use of hypothetical case studies. Themes such as ethical issues related to competency, informed consent, dual relationships as well as timely issues such as virtual forensic assessment necessitated by the COVID-19 pandemic will be discussed with students through the use of case studies. We plan to have a pilot phase of this experiential learning opportunity for students enrolled in one Fall 2020 Hybrid FLP 540- Forensic Assessment course and then based upon student feedback and instructor evaluation of the pilot phase the aforementioned Ethical Case Studies exercise will be expanded upon and further evaluated for incorporation in future FLP 540 courses and FLP Student Learning Assessment Reports.

**Learning Outcome 2: Argue the Strengths and Weaknesses of Policy Issues Relevant to the Field of Forensic and Legal Psychology**

Outcome Measures	Performance Standard	Data Collection	Result		
What percentage of the class effectively demonstrated the ability to develop a coherent written argument discussing the strengths and weaknesses of Policy Issues relevant to the field of Forensic and Legal Psychology as evidenced by a score by a score of 25 out of 30 points or higher on the FLP 527- Psychology, Public Policy and the Law Background Paper assignment.	The standard requires 90% of the students to earn points a score of 25 out of 30 points or higher using the grading rubric.  See Appendix B for assignment and Rubric	The population for this outcome measure consists of 48 graduate students in the Forensic and Legal Psychology Program enrolled in the required course, Psychology, Public Policy and the Law in the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 Semester	Results of the assessed were:		
			Score	# of Students	% of Students
			16	1	2.08%
			18	1	2.08%
			20	1	2.08%
			21	3	6.25%
			22	3	6.25%
			23	2	4.16%
			24	3	6.25%
			25	3	6.25%
			26	5	10.41%
			27	3	6.25%
			28	3	6.25%
29	16	33.3%			
30	4	8.33%			

			Percent meeting the standard was 70.79%. Thus, the standard was not met.															
What percentage of the class effectively demonstrated the ability to argue the strengths and weaknesses of Policy Issues relevant to the field of Forensic and Legal Psychology as evidenced by a score of 33 out of 35 points or higher on In-Class Debate assignment.	The standard requires 90% of the students to earn a score of 33 out of 35 points or higher using the grading rubric.  See Appendix C for assignment and Rubric	The population for this outcome measure consists of 29 graduate students in the Forensic and Legal Psychology Program enrolled in the required course, Psychology, Public Policy and the Law in the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 Semester	Results of the assessed were:  <table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th>Score</th> <th># of Students</th> <th>% of Students</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>32</td> <td>2</td> <td>6.90%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>33</td> <td>7</td> <td>24.14%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>34</td> <td>11</td> <td>37.93%</td> </tr> <tr> <td>35</td> <td>9</td> <td>31.03%</td> </tr> </tbody> </table> Percent meeting the standard was 93.1%. Thus, the standard was met.	Score	# of Students	% of Students	32	2	6.90%	33	7	24.14%	34	11	37.93%	35	9	31.03%
Score	# of Students	% of Students																
32	2	6.90%																
33	7	24.14%																
34	11	37.93%																
35	9	31.03%																

**Interpretation of Results**

Analysis and Implications: *What does this result tell you about the extent to which your students achieved this outcome? What are the strengths and weaknesses that this result highlights, and what are the implications for your curriculum or your program?*

In our previous assessment report for this measure in 2017-2018 we proposed inclusion of a new assignment to expand upon our Policy Brief assignment for the FLP 527- Psychology, Public Policy and the Law Course that was assessed in the 2017-2018 Student Learning Assessment Report in which the students exceeded the outcome we proposed for the Policy Brief assignment. The new assignment we developed for the FLP 527 Course was the Background Paper assigned which was designed to assess whether students can effectively develop a coherent written argument. Unfortunately, the standard which we proposed for this outcome was not met in the 2019-2020 year however we plan to continue to expand upon this assignment through developing a second written component of the Policy Brief assignment in which the students will develop a Policy Implementation Plan (please see section below on planned curricular improvements for further discussion on how we propose to improve this outcome).

We are pleased with our findings that the standard for the Debate assignment was met as it demonstrates to our department that our students have the ability to argue the strengths and weaknesses of Policy Issues relevant to the field of Forensic and Legal Psychology as evidenced by a score of 33 out of 35 points or higher on In-Class Debate assignment. We believe that the ability to effectively discuss policy issues through oral arguments as well as the public speaking skills gained through completing the Debate assignment will serve our students well upon graduation as they seek employment in an ever-increasingly competitive job market.

Program Strengths and Opportunities for Improvement- *relative to assessment of outcome*

We believe a strength of our program is how we provide students with opportunities to develop skills that have meaningful and practical application within our field. We will continue to assign the Debate assignment in the FLP 527 course as well as we believe the oral argument and public speaking skills gained through completion of this assignment are imperative for our students to develop and master in the highly competitive job market as we believe the aforementioned skills will provide our students with a competitive edge over other applicants for jobs within our field.

We also believe that an opportunity for improvement can be completed through further development of the Policy Brief assignment which is discussed in further detail in the section below on planned curricular development.

Discuss planned curricular or program improvements for this year based on assessment of outcome: The Policy Implementation Plan component of the Policy Brief assignment will focus on developing advanced writing skills in which the students will address the strengths and weaknesses of policy issues as well as how they envision implementing their proposed policy initiatives discussed in their Policy Brief Assignment with a hypothetical scenario in which they were afforded the opportunity to receive funding to develop their proposed initiatives into viable action items in the “real world” and in so doing have a better understanding as to how policy changes occur in the field. As part of the course, an expert on Public Policy from the field comes to class to discuss the timeline of a recent policy initiative organized by the Public Policy expert and this expert explains public policy in action and the process by which public policy initiatives come to fruition by discussing the timeline and action items completed in a real case example of a recent public policy initiative organized by the expert that occurred at the Federal level of the U.S. government signed by the Director of the Federal Bureau of Investigation which resulted in changes in the classification of specific types of crime in the National Incident Based Reporting System used by law enforcement agencies and police departments throughout the United States.

Appendix A: FLP 540- Forensic Assessment Research Paper Description and Rubric

Students are required to complete a research paper regarding how to ethically address issues pertaining to a particular type of forensic assessment. Using the APA Code of Conduct and Specialty Guidelines, students should identify relevant ethical issues that pertain to their selected topic regarding forensic assessment and support an argument for how evaluators should address the ethical guidelines appropriately. Students must utilize specific ethical guidelines, rather than relying solely on the General Principles from the Code of Conduct, in their paper.

Although students may utilize required readings from class in their paper, and are required to use the ethical guidelines provided in class, the use of these materials will not count towards the use of outside sources. Sources from popular media or non-scholarly journals/texts will not count towards this requirement (e.g., Wikipedia, Psychology Today, Dictionary.com, other non-scholarly websites). Students are expected to utilize at least ten (10) outside sources that consist of scholarly material and are articles/texts that were not required reading for the course.

If students utilize legal cases or standards as their sources, it must be evident that the student utilized the actual case summary/opinion, rather than relied on others' summaries of the cases. The paper will be a minimum of 2500 words in length. The title page, abstract, and reference list will not count towards the length requirement. Students are required to utilize APA format throughout the paper.

The grading rubric for the paper is below as follows:

FLP 540- FORENSIC ASSESSMENT-RESEARCH PAPER GRADING RUBRIC

Criteria	Points Possible	Points Earned	Instructor's Comments
<b>Title Page</b>			
Running head is present and proper (i.e., Running head: abbreviated title; flush left).	3		
Full title is appropriate and in the proper place.	3		
Additional title page information is in correct, current APA format.	3		
<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>/9</b>	
<b>Abstract</b>			
The abstract is no more than 250 words and has relevant content.	9		
Proper, current APA style formatting (not indented; no references, double-spaced, correct heading, etc.).	3		
<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>/12</b>	
<b>Assignment Content and Organization</b>			
The assignment is grammatically correct.	3		
The assignment is typographically correct.	3		
Proper use of quotations, commas, italics, and other punctuation marks. No additional spacing between paragraphs. Proper indenting and paragraph length.	3		

Proper APA style headings are present for each section of the paper (Abstract, Introduction, Sections 1–6, Conclusion, Reference Page)	3		
Text is written in a coherent, succinct and well-organized manner (proper sentence structure; good transitions from paragraph to paragraph and section to section).	3		
Points are well presented, logical, and insightful.	3		
Points are supported by proper use of references (in-text citations are used wherever facts are stated).	3		
Content is relevant in regards to—and sufficiently fulfills—assignment requirements:  <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Clear Identification of Ethical Topic Presented (i.e. This paper will explore the ethical dilemmas faced by Psychologists in the Evaluation of Child Custody)</li> <li>2. Specific Ethical Issues Related to the Topic Presented (i.e. Psychopathology, medication, age, gender, race, intelligence, memory, etc.)</li> <li>3. How should evaluators address the ethical issues using APA Conduct and Specialty Guidelines? (i.e. Competence, Relationships, Informed Consent, etc.)</li> <li>4. Future Considerations overlooked by current body of Research (i.e. Given the review of literature, in the future, evaluators should seek to explore ___ factors when involved in the evaluation of child custody)</li> </ol>	40		
Assignment is professionally written in the 3 <sup>rd</sup> person	3		
Assignment is the proper length (2500 words, not including title page, abstract, and reference page; does not exceed required length).	3		
Total	67	/67	
Citations, Quotations, and References			
The assignment contains a reference page free of errors (current APA style).	3		
The reference page contains at least 10 empirical article references that are all cited in the context of the paper.	3		
References are from professional sources (Codes, professional journals, and professional texts; no informal web-sites)	3		
Quotations are introduced properly, not excessive, and presented in proper and current APA style (i.e. Smith & Jung, 2004, p. 123).	3		
References/citations Total	12	/12	
Research Paper Total	100	/100	

## The Policy Brief<sup>1</sup>

### Overview

The policy brief is a document which *outlines the rationale for choosing a particular policy alternative or course of action in a current policy debate*. It is commonly produced in response to a request directly from a decision-maker or within an organisation that intends to advocate for the position detailed in the brief. Depending on the role of the writer or organisation producing the document, the brief may only provide a targeted discussion of the current alternatives without arguing for a particular one (i.e. those who adopt the role of 'objective' researcher). On the other end of the scale, i.e. advocates, the brief may focus directly on providing an argument for the adoption of a particular alternative. Nevertheless for any case, as any policy debate is a market-place of competing ideas, *the purpose of the policy brief is to convince the target audience of the urgency of the current problem and the need to adopt the preferred alternative or course of action outlined and therefore, serve as an impetus for action*.

As with all good marketing tools, *the key to success is targeting the particular audience for your message*. The most common audience for a policy brief is the decision-maker but, it is also not unusual to use the document to support broader advocacy initiatives targeting a wide but knowledgeable audience (e.g. decision makers, journalists, diplomats, administrators, researchers). In constructing a policy brief that can effectively serve its intended purpose, it is common for a brief to be:

- **Focused** – all aspects of the policy brief (from the message to the layout) need to be strategically focused on achieving the intended goal of convincing the target audience. For example, the argument provided must build on what they do know about the problem, provide insight about what they don't know about the problem and be presented in language that reflects their values, i.e. using ideas, evidence and language that will convince them.
- **Professional, not academic** –The common audience for a policy brief is not interested in the research/analysis procedures conducted to produce the evidence, but are very interested to know the writer's perspective on the problem and potential solutions based on the new evidence.
- **Evidence-based** – The policy brief is a communication tool produced by policy analysts and therefore all potential audiences not only expect a rational argument but will only be convinced by argumentation supported by evidence that the problem exists and the consequences of adopting particular alternatives.
- **Limited** – to provide an adequately comprehensive but targeted argument within a limited space, the focus of the brief needs to be limited to a particular problem or area of a problem.
- **Succinct** – The type of audiences targeted commonly do not have the time or inclination to read an in-depth 20 page argument on a policy problem. Therefore,

---

<sup>1</sup> This description of the policy brief was developed by Eoin Young and Lisa Quinn as LGI training materials and based on the analysis of samples and from a number of guidelines such as: David Dickson. *Guidelines for SciDev.Net Opinion articles*. Available on the World Wide Web. URL: <http://www.scidev.net/ms/entebbe/index.cfm?pageid=134> [29 Feb. 2004]. Hong Kong University. *Guidelines for Writing a Policy Brief*. Available on the World Wide Web. URL: <http://www.hku.hk/psychodp/P2/PSYC0036B/Tut1note.doc> [29 Feb. 2004]. Richards. *The policy options brief*. Available on the World Wide Web. URL: [http://www.gse.buffalo.edu/Fas/Jacobson/629/webnotes/policy\\_brief.htm](http://www.gse.buffalo.edu/Fas/Jacobson/629/webnotes/policy_brief.htm) [29 Feb. 2004]. Prof. Tsai. *Guidelines for Writing a Policy Brief*. Available on the World Wide Web. URL: <http://jhuunix.bcf.jhu.edu/~ktsai/policybrief.html> [29 Feb. 2004].

Appendix B- Document 2: FLP 527- Psychology, Public Policy and the Law Policy Brief Assignment Rubric

<i>Criterion</i>	Possible Score	Score and Comments
Content: including political and ethical issues, underlying research and theory.	6	
Format: effective layout, colors, visual attractiveness, ease of reading.	6	
Effectiveness of Writing: correct grammar, punctuation, APA style; flow of writing, sentence structure and organization.	6	
Persuasiveness: cohesiveness of reasoning and argument. Convinces audience of urgency of the problem and effectiveness of recommendations. Title grabs the reader and sets forth the argument.	6	
Overall: brief appropriate for target audience, written for professionals not academics. Not too much text.	6	
<i>Total</i>	30	

Appendix B- Document 2: FLP 527- Psychology, Public Policy and the Law Background Paper Assignment Overview & Rubric

**Background Paper and Legislative Tracking Assignment**

Students will write a paper of between 1250-1500 words (excluding title page, abstract, and references), with an introduction to their topic, a concise and relevant literature review, societal context, and stakeholder opinions (including contributions from social science). APA style should be excellent. An abstract of approximately 100 words, a word count print out, and Turnitin certification must be included with the paper.

Throughout the semester, each student will track the activity of his/her selected policy issue in the local, state or federal legislative process. This project will involve following debates in the media (TV, Internet and Print). Students will write a no-more-than two page bulleted summary of legislative activity on their topic.

<b>Rubric</b>	
Title Page	<b>1</b>
Abstract	<b>2</b>
Thesis Statement	<b>3</b>
Introduction	<b>3</b>
Summary of Existing Literature	<b>4</b>
Critical Thinking, Relevance of Sources, Clarity of Argument	<b>6</b>
Writing Style	<b>6</b>
Bibliography (APA style, Quality of Sources)	<b>5</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>30</b>



Appendix C: FLP 527- Psychology, Public Policy and the Law In-Class Debate Assignment Description & Rubric

In-Class Debates

1. Class will divide into teams of two, and each team will rank their top three topic selections from *Criminal Justice Policy*.
2. The instructor will assign topics (providing materials from the text book) to each team.
  - a. Two teams will be assigned to each topic.
  - b. Each team must prepare both a pro and con argument.
  - c. In the case of a class with an odd number of teams, one team will be asked to prepare for two debates (volunteers will be accepted first come first serve)
3. On the day of the debate every team member must participate in the oral argument.
4. The debate proceeds as follows:
  - a. Opening Arguments:
    - i. Team A presents for the Pro Proposition 10 Minutes
    - ii. Team B presents for the Con Proposition 10 Minutes
  - b. Preparation for Rebuttal:
    - i. Teams prep rebuttals 5 Minutes
    - ii. At the same time Class prepares questions
  - c. Rebuttals:
    - i. Team A Rebuttal 5 Minutes
      1. Class Questions 3 Minutes
    - ii. Team B Rebuttal 5 Minutes
      1. Class Questions 3 Minutes
5. Winning team chosen by class vote.
6. Class observers fill out the assessment rubric and pass it to the instructor who will summarize the points and assign a grade to the teams.

Rubric Source: <http://course1.winona.edu/shatfield/air/classdebate.pdf>