

Strategic Plan (2025-2029) in Psychology Program

PSYCHOLOGY FACULTY

RESEARCH STRATEGIC PLAN (2025-2028)

The UBT Research Strategic Plan (2023-2028) in the Psychology Program includes missions, vision, values statement, and goals consistent with UBT's Strategy. The main mission of the Undergraduate program in Psychology at UBT is to enrich the teaching and learning atmosphere and methodologies, to contribute to the community and society, and to promote research in psychology. We aim to achieve this through establishing a carefully designed undergraduate program, which follows EuroPsy guidelines, and combines teaching and learning through theory, practice, community engagement, and research participation for our students.

The UBT Research Strategic Plan (2023-2028) in Psychology Program is a component of the overall UBT Research Strategy. The Psychology Program strategic plan identifies the aligned research and education commitments, investments and strategies that will support reaching its goals.

PSYCHOLOGY PROGRAM MISSION, VISION AND VALUES

MISSION

To contribute to higher education through contemporary curricula, based and harmonized with the best practice at European level, distinct educational philosophy, research and services to the community.

The mission of the UBT Psychology Program Strategy complies with the UBT institutional declaration of mission: "UBT offers a dynamic and innovative 21st century academic environment. UBT provides a supportive and challenging opportunity for the students, faculty and staff in participatory and self-governance setting. Building on a tradition of teamwork between students, faculty, staff and administrators, UBT is committed to enhance its participation as an active member of community by providing learning opportunities driven by teaching and research excellence, intellectual interaction and creativity. UBT is a preminent center of intellectual and cultural activity in Kosovo, improving the region's quality of life through the skills, knowledge, experience and engagement of its faculty, staff, students and alumni". 1

1<https://www.ubt-uni.net/en/ubt-en/mission-and-vision/mission>

The Psychology Program Strategy strives to provide an environment that fosters collegiality, respect, and a commitment to the collective success of the department. Faculty, staff, and students contribute significantly to the program's fulfillment of its three main goals:

Produce cutting edge research in psychological science to further the understanding of complex behavior, thoughts, and emotions.

Provide undergraduate students with rigorous academic programs that build critical thinking and enhance understanding of complex behavior, thoughts, and emotions.

Serve the university, scientific community, and broader society by promoting psychological science.

VISION

The Psychology Program in UBT aims to become one of the leading institutions in psychological research and education, and as such to contribute to an enhanced interdisciplinary culture, with an emphasis on high-quality research, with special attention to our undergraduates.

CORE VALUES

Research Excellence: We will strive for excellence in all aspects related to research, following all research guidelines set by APA. Our research topics and research methods will continue to be carefully selected and designed, and conference participation and publications will be stimulated and supported by our faculty staff.

Scientific Inquiry: Psychology is a highly interdisciplinary field driven by scientific inquiry. Furthermore, psychology is a hub science and is key to linking together other disciplines. As such, collaborations across areas and other departments are valued. Notably, this

interdisciplinary focus allows us to advance and apply theory and to answer "big" questions in psychological science and behavioral neuroscience.

Teaching Excellence: Research and teaching must be integrated when training students. Our graduate and undergraduate students complete a program of study that encourages critical thinking and prepares them for their future careers. We value student mentoring, hands-on research experience, and innovation in teaching.

Diversity & Inclusiveness: We value diversity, both as a means of advancing science, and as an end to itself. The Program is committed to welcoming individuals with diverse backgrounds, experiences, and viewpoints into our community, and to creating an inclusive environment for all

Vibrant Intellectual Community: We believe that a collegial community is necessary to support the advancement of psychological science and behavioral neuroscience. Respect, support, engagement, and effective communication are key features of our community.

MAIN GOALS:

Generate research that impacts discipline and community.

Promote a scientific understanding of human behavior through a rigorous program of undergraduate education that provides students with skills relevant to the needs of today's employers and enables undergraduates to achieve their goal.

Implement practices and policies that provide an inclusive workplace and learning environment.

Development of the research capacities throughout institutional and international collaborations (at home and abroad), that will strengthen research skills of academic staff as well as students.

Establishing and strengthening research and technological infrastructure, which will support various developmental research labs, digital software for data collection, analysis and storage, as well as datasets available to work with, for academic staff and students.

Strategies for Accomplishing Goal #1 Generate Research that impacts discipline and community

Strategy 1. Recruit, retain, and develop top scientific minds

Recruit and retain tenure-track faculty who build on existing departmental strengths and have fundable research programs.

Promote faculty research programs through investment of resources in research groups organized around core strengths (i.e., areas targeted for development & growth by faculty consensus) with a history of productivity or high potential for future intellectual impact.

Provide support for faculty to develop skills and resources needed for engagement in the field.

Implement formal mentoring programs for faculty and consider mentoring as important service.

Foster an exciting intellectual environment by providing opportunities for dialogue, engagement, and collaborations.

Strategy 2. Increase frequency and impact of publications

Tie resource allocation and workload to number and quality of publications.

Evaluate the impact of work on promotion and tenure decisions.

Develop and enhance department infrastructure so faculty can focus their time on being research productive (e.g., hiring additional staff and providing training as needed to ensure quality research administration; streamline administrative procedures; use technology to reduce administrative burdens).

Strategy 3. Increasing extramural research funding

Strategically invest in research programs based on potential return on investment.

Secure and distribute funds to conduct required pilot investigations.

Create incentives for resubmission of competitively scored grants.

Invest in development and training resources to support faculty grant-writing.

Identify and disseminate mechanisms for state funding, small grant funding, and exploratory grant funding, and encourage applications to these opportunities.

Strategies for Accomplishing Goal #2

Promote scientific understanding of behavior through a rigorous program of undergraduate education that provides students with skills relevant to today's employers and enables undergraduates to achieve their goals

Strategy 1. Deliver high-quality undergraduate education that is modern and end-focused

Develop online or hybrid courses, based on department needs and faculty training and interest.

Develop courses and curricular tracks that include skill-focused knowledge and experiences.

Provide resources for course development relevant to study abroad opportunities for undergraduates, with a focus on globalization.

Provide resources to support and recognition for faculty-student interactions that promote mentoring and skills training.

Recognize and promote pedagogical innovations and strong teachers who are responsive to students.

Strategy 2. Develop innovative methods to enhance the advising of large numbers of undergraduate students, given limited advising resources

Support creative solutions to advising issues and provide resources for their implementation.

Support the professional development of advisors, including training in best practices for advising in higher education.

Promote mechanisms to offer advice about career and post-secondary educational opportunities to undergraduates.

Strategy 3. Place graduates in relevant and prestigious jobs and programs

Establish an advisory council made up of alumni and members representative of the diverse group of employers who hire psychology majors.

Identify those skills most desired by employers and build upon those aspects of the undergraduate curriculum.

Build upon the existing curriculum to develop courses and structures that prepare students interested in graduate school.

Generate internship opportunities for undergraduates that match their professional aspirations.

Strategies for Accomplishing Goal #3

Implement practices and policies that provide an inclusive workplace and learning environment

Strategy 1. Create a culture in which faculty act for the greater good of the Program

Engage full-rank faculty to lead department initiatives to attain strategic objectives.

Consider quality departmental service in evaluations.

Encourage more positive faculty-staff interactions and a culture of mutual respect and assistance.

Strategy 2. Maintain strong, transparent Program leadership with active faculty and staff engagement

Engage a committee to annually evaluate progress toward strategic objectives, provide suggestions for further development, and report to the department.

Engage faculty committees in standardizing and disseminating policies that impact the department (consistent with university/college policies).

Develop agendas for all department committees at the start of each semester.

Create a feedback mechanism for the department head to be able to evaluate performance.

Include staff members on committees and in meetings that are relevant to their job positions or interests.

Strategy 3. Foster a workplace and learning environment that supports and encourages diversity

Develop department programs/policies that enhance recruitment and retention of faculty and graduate students from underrepresented backgrounds.

Develop administrative and advising practices that enhance recruitment and retention of undergraduate psychology majors from underrepresented backgrounds.

Develop a mechanism to train and retain quality staff in department positions, and to foster a supportive working environment.

Develop guidelines for and support for academic professional programs.

Strategies for Accomplishing Goal #4

Development of the research capacities throughout institutional and international collaborations (at home and abroad), that will strengthen research skills of academic staff as well as students.

Strategy 1. Increase the number of Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Faculty of Psychology of UBT College, with Universities in Region and beyond, as well increasing the professional exchange opportunities for both academic staff as well students.

Academic staff with international experience will mediate the collaborative agreements between Faculty of Psychology and other Universities in the region and beyond, to develop a joint research project, and produce scientific knowledge, documenting this through scientific publications. Such agreements mediated from the academic staff are in process with a) MoU with Department of Psychology, Palacky University Olomouc, Czechia; b) MoU with Department of Psychology, University of Seville, Spain.

Engaging alumni students of the Faculty of Psychology in the inter-institutional mediation process, where they are continuing their studies at the master's level. Such agreements are in process with the Department of Psychology of the University of Padova, in Italy.

Strategy 2. Identification and application for calls for co-financing from national and international organizations such as Horizon Europe, COST Actions, Erasmus+, and other funding initiatives.

Active monitoring of information sources / official calls for co-financing opportunities, from the cluster working groups within the Faculty of Psychology, and from the network from international partners, by evaluating priority and compatibility and the feasibility of implementing such project in Kosovo.

Strengthening long-term cooperation with existing international partners through joint re-application in calls for co-financing such as COST, Europe Horizon, HaDEA, and so on, by relying on previous successful experiences and building on the results achieved.

Strengthening national collaboration with stakeholders, non-governmental organizations and research institutions that offer development and employment opportunities for students of the Faculty of Psychology, especially those with a

research-oriented career, ensuring the sustainability of Psychology studies and orientation in research, in the long term.

Strategy 3. Engaging co-advisors in the academic process for diploma topics and theses.

Defining academic standards and common criteria, through specific agreements for the co-supervision of bachelor's and master's degree theses, with Faculty of Psychology Professors and international Professors.

Creating and fostering opportunities for students, for research exchange at the host higher education institution (e.g. Erasmus plus, or bilateral projects), for a period of 1 month or longer, as part of scientific research for a diploma thesis.

Creating and fostering opportunities for students to work in a collaborative professional environment, even in a hybrid or remote collaboration model, through regular meetings.

Strategies for Accomplishing Goal #5

Establishing and strengthening research and technological infrastructure, which will support various developmental research labs, digital software for data collection, analysis and storage, as well as datasets available to work with, for academic staff and students.

Strategy 1. Establishing the research units/research labs at the UBT Campus, for the systematic data collection that will build a research culture, that will support the development of theory, replication of the research findings, and enhance the practical research skills among students for work in the industry.

Establishing research units/labs such Child and Family Studies Lab, Adolescent Development Lab, Cognitive Development Lab, or Adult Psychopathology Lab, led by the senior faculty staff, and supported by students.

Development of standardized measurement instruments in research and clinical terms, which assess mental processes such as attention, memory, decision-making, affective and behavioral problems, especially with a special focus on cultural adaptations.

Develop and implement research protocols that ensure replicability, and transparency, in line with Open Science principles, that support future research replication and theory development.

Strategy 2. Creation and use of digital scientific research platforms at national and international level.

Using sophisticated software for online data collection such as Qualtrics and/or KoboToolbox as secure platforms, under institutional purchase license.

The use of advanced software for statistical analysis of qualitative data (e.g., NVivo, Dedoose, Atlas.ti), quantitative data (e.g., SPSS, R, MatLab, Stata), Experimental research designs (e.g., E-prime), or Scoping Review and Meta-analysis (e.g., Rayyan, Covidence), under institutional purchase license.

Strict implementation of data protection and privacy policies in compliance with the provisions of law protection on the protection of personal data as per National Regulations within Kosovo, as well General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) policies, particularly on digital shared datasets.

Use institution-approved platforms for research data storage on encrypted servers, or other recommended safe platforms.

Strategy 3: Continuing professional development workshops for academic staff as well students regarding the Ethical Principles of Psychologists and the Code of Conduct in Research in Research as well as in the psychological environment, including the use of artificial intelligence.

Continued professional development for the use of Artificial Intelligence in research and clinical settings.

Develop protocols to provide a better understanding of the interplay between Artificial intelligence and academic integrity.

The research into the Psychology Program will be organized in six main areas:

Health Psychology

Clinical and Counselling Psychology

Industrial/Organizational Psychology

Social Psychology

Educational Psychology

Personality Psychology and

Developmental Psychology is covered jointly across several of these areas. The six areas, as well as Developmental Psychology, mark the long-term priorities of the research at the Psychology Program at UBT.

Health Psychology, which examines best practices for a healthy lifestyle, stress-related illnesses, stress prevention and treatment practices, mental health issues associated with healthcare workers, and patients' mental and emotional reactions to an illness or recovery from an illness.

Industrial/Organizational Psychology, focusing on issues related to employees' motivation and job satisfaction, management styles, measuring stress related to work performance, stress management strategies in the workplace, and burnout prevention and treatment.

Clinical and Counselling Psychology, looking to better understand the prevalence of mental health issues among various populations, including personality disorders, examining the effects of different psychotherapeutic techniques for treating anxiety, depression, PTSD, etc., and specifically focusing on the diagnosis and treatment of long-term mental illness in hospitals and other settings that offer psychological and psychiatric services.

Social Psychology- which examines social cognition, attitudes, and attitude change of various social groups on specific issues, the relationship between social learning and aggressive behavior and violence, pro-social behavior, prejudice, and discrimination among various social and ethnic groups, and social influence.

Personality Psychology, which includes the inquiry into personality theories, main influences on personality development, personality traits, and their correlation to creativity, prosocial behaviour, anti-social behaviour, and personality assessment.

Educational Psychology greatly focuses on children's cognitive development and learning abilities, improving classroom experiences for children and adolescents, all-inclusive education, effective teaching methods according to age-group, peer pressure, bullying, and educational support for children with special needs.

Other prioritized aims:

Recruitment of excellent researchers with a focus on high publication quality and productivity.

Better career development of talented young researchers in the Program including PhD students (who study in international Universities), Post-Doctoral Fellows, and Assistant Professors.

Increased external funding, particularly from private and EU sources.

Continued focus on providing possibilities for our students to participate in research and integrate this into their education.