PROGRAMME STANDARDS: PSYCHOLOGY

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FOREWORD

In its effort to ensure the quality of programmes in institutions of higher learning in Malaysia, Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA) has published various documents such as Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF), Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation (COPPA), Code of Practice for Institutional Audit (COPIA), Guidelines to Good Practices (GGP) and Programme Standards (PS). It is important that these quality assurance documents be read together with this document in developing and delivering higher education programmes in Malaysia.

The Programme Standards document outlines sets of characteristics that describe and represent guidelines on the minimum levels of acceptable practices that cover all the nine Malaysian quality assurance areas: programme aims and learning outcomes, curriculum design and delivery, assessment of students, student selection, academic staff, educational resources, programme monitoring and review, leadership, governance and administration, and continual quality improvement. The Programme Standards for Psychology covers the education levels: from diploma to doctoral.

This Programme Standards document has been developed by a panel of experts in consultation with various public and private Higher Education Providers (HEPs), relevant government and statutory agencies, professional bodies, related Psychology fields and students.

This standards do not attempt to give specific characteristics for the programmes, especially for those related to the framing of the curricula and provision of educational resources. This Programme Standards document encourages diversity and allows programme providers to be innovative and to be able to customise their programmes in order to create their own niches, while ensuring they produce graduates that meet the current needs of the profession and ensuring they fulfil their obligations to society. Some examples given in this Programme Standards document, such as the statements of programme aims and learning outcomes, are intended to give clarity to the document; they are not intended to be adopted in a verbatim manner.

I would like to express my appreciation to all the panel members, the various stakeholders who have given their input, and all the officers from MQA who have contributed to the development of this Programme Standards: Psychology document.

Thank you.

Dato' Dr. Syed Ahmad Hussein

Chief Executive Officer

Malaysian Qualifications Agency (MQA)

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GLOSSARY

1)	Dissertation	The documentation of the original research prepared and submitted by the candidate for the award of the degree for the masters programme by research, and mixed mode.
2)	Formative assessment	The assessment of student progress throughout a course, in which the feedback from the learning activities is used to improve student attainment.
3)	Modules	Modules are component of a programme. The term module is used interchangeable with subject, units, or courses.
4)	Summative Assessment	The assessment of learning, which summarizes the progress of the learner at a particular time and is used to assign the learner a course grade.
5)	Thesis	The documentation of the original research prepared and submitted by the candidate for the award of the degree for the doctoral programme by research, and mixed mode.
6)	Viva voce	Oral defence of the dissertation/thesis for the programme.

ABBREVIATIONS

APEL	Accreditation of Prior Experiential Learning
COPIA	Code of Practice for Institutional Audit
COPPA	Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation
CPD	Continuous Professional Development
CGPA	Cumulative Grade Point Average
GGP	Guidelines to Good Practices
GP	Grade Point
HEP	Higher Education Provider
MOE	Ministry of Education Malaysia
MQA	Malaysian Qualifications Agency
MQF	Malaysian Qualifications Framework
SPM	*Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia*
STPM	*Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia*

INTRODUCTION

Psychology is the scientific study of behaviour and mental processes: how we think, feel, act and interact interpersonally and in groups. Psychology is concerned with all aspects of behaviour and with the thoughts, feelings and motivations underlying that behaviour. Psychologists are interested in what makes people behave in certain ways and how this understanding can help solve major problems in society.

When psychology started as a discipline, it lies at the crossroads of other disciplines, such as medicine, linguistics, sociology, biology, artificial intelligence, anthropology, sociology, and even history.

However, it has been widely accepted that psychology is a scientific discipline and psychologists study human behaviour by observing, measuring and testing, then arriving at conclusions that are rooted in sound scientific methodology. Thus, to be taught as a science, psychology requires extensive training in a range of research methods, which include laboratory experiments, field survey, natural observations and case studies. This can be achieved by allowing students or trainees to undertake supervised research projects with an academician with established research skills.

Some of the popular and major branches of psychology are briefly described below.

i. **Biological psychology** is the branch of psychology concerned primarily with how biological processes and the underlying physiological events affect, or are involved in human behaviour and mental processes. Other similar terms are: biopsychology, psychobiology, physiological psychology, psychophysiology, and behavioural neuroscience. Other related sub areas include neuropsychology and evolutionary psychology.

ii. **Clinical psychology** is the branch of psychology that applies psychological theories, methods and research in the assessment and treatment of mental disorders. Other related term is psychotherapy.

iii. **Cognitive psychology** is the branch of psychology that studies mental processes including attention, language use, memory, perception, problem solving, thinking, decision-making, learning, and intelligence.

iv. **Consumer psychology** is the branch of psychology that applies psychological theories, methods and research in understanding how people (individual, group, or organisation) buy and relate to goods and services. It may be part of industrial and organisational psychology. Some other related terms are consumer behaviour, psychology of marketing, psychology of advertising, and economic psychology.

v. **Counselling psychology** is the branch of psychology that applies psychological theories, methods and research in working collaboratively with client across a diverse range of human problems such as vocational selection, school problems, drug abuse, and marital conflict. In contrast to clinical psychologists, counselling psychologists often work with clients who are experiencing less severe symptoms. Other related term is guidance and counselling.

vi. **Developmental psychology** is the branch of psychology that studies changes in human being (e.g. physical, cognitive, social, emotional, and moral development) throughout the life-span (from conception until death).

vii. **Educational psychology** is the branch of psychology that applies psychological theories, methods and research in understanding and improving how humans learn in educational settings, the effectiveness of educational interventions, the psychology of teaching, and the social psychology of schools as organisations. Other related term is school psychology.

viii. **Engineering psychology** is the branch of psychology that applies psychological theories, methods and research in understanding and improving the relationships between people and machines by redesigning equipment, interactions, or the environment in which they take place. Other

related terms are ergonomic, human factors, traffic psychology, and aviation psychology.

ix.   **Environmental psychology** is the branch of psychology that applies psychological theories, methods and research in understanding and improving the interplay between humans and their surroundings (e.g. natural environments, social settings, built environments, learning environments, and informational environments).   Other related term is architectural psychology.

x.   **Experimental psychology** is the branch of psychology that studies behaviour and mental processes using experimental methods.   The topic studied varies and usually concerns basic psychological processes such as sensation/perception, memory, cognition, learning, motivation, emotion, developmental psychology, and social psychology.

xi.   **Forensic psychology** is the branch of psychology that applies psychological theories, methods and research in understanding and improving the process of law (i.e. evidence, witnesses and the courts); and understanding and reduction of criminal behaviours. Other similar terms are legal psychology, criminal psychology, and criminological psychology. Other related terms are police psychology, prison psychology, and criminology.

xii.   **Health psychology** is the branch of psychology that applies psychological theories, methods and research in understanding and improving physical health and illnesses. Other related terms are clinical health psychology, and occupational health psychology.

xiii.   **Industrial/Organisational psychology** is the branch of psychology that applies psychological theories, methods and research in understanding and improving workers, workplaces, and organisations' productivity and well-being. Other similar terms are occupational psychology, work psychology, work and organisational psychology, managerial psychology, and management psychology. Other related terms are personnel psychology,

consumer psychology, engineering psychology, business psychology, human resource management, and organisational behaviours.

xiv. **Neuropsychology** is the branch of psychology that applies psychological theories, methods and research in assessing and treatment of behaviour directly related to brain functioning. Other related terms are neuroscience, cognitive neuropsychology, and clinical neuropsychology.

xv. **Personality psychology** is the branch of psychology that studies personality and individual differences.

xvi. **Political psychology** is the branch of psychology that applies psychological theories, methods and research in understanding and improving political behaviours and systems. Other related terms are peace psychology, and military psychology.

xvii. **Social psychology** is the branch of psychology that studies how people's thoughts, feelings, and behaviours are influenced by the actual, imagined, or implied presence of others.

xviii. **Sport psychology** is the branch of psychology that applies psychological theories, methods and research in understanding and improving performance and participation in sports and exercise. Other similar term is Exercise Psychology.

As evidenced by the rapid advancement of the sub-specialties within the Psychology disciplines, HEPs must introduce effective and sustainable programme improvement. In doing so, the providers should ensure the graduates obtain necessary knowledge and skills to function effectively as academics, researchers or professionals and members of the society.

These standards are developed with reference to the manuals and guidelines practiced by major psychology associations such as American Psychological Association (APA), Australian Psychological Society (APS) and British Psychological Society (BPS). In countries where psychology is well established as a profession (i.e.,

the profession is governed by professional bodies enacted by law), only those with postgraduate qualification are called psychologists and allowed to practice.

The information provided is not intended to prescribe a particular approach to meeting our standards; rather it is intended to reflect the likely areas of interest for HEPs or reviewers when exploring achievement of the standards with the stakeholders.

Purpose

The purpose of this Programme Standards is to provide guidelines in relation to the development and conduct of programmes in the identified fields, it is of paramount importance that this document be read with other quality assurance documents and policies by the Malaysian Qualifications Agency and related agencies. These include but are not limited to:

1. Malaysian Qualifications Framework (MQF);
2. Code of Practice for Programme Accreditation (COPPA);
3. Code of Practice for Institutional Audit (COPIA); and
4. Relevant Guidelines to Good Practices (GGPs).

This Programme Standards is subdivided into the following areas:
1. Programme Aims and Learning Outcomes;
2. Curriculum Design and Delivery;
3. Student Selection;
4. Student Assessment;
5. Academic Staff;
6. Educational Resources;
7. Programme Monitoring and Review;
8. Leadership, Governance and Administration;
9. Continual Quality Improvement (CQI); and
10. Appendices.

Levels of Study

The Programme Standards: Psychology, as a whole, describes the different levels of standards leading to the award of individual qualifications, namely Diploma (MQF

level 4), Bachelor's Degree (MQF Level 6), Postgraduate Diploma & Master's Degree (MQF Level 7), and Doctoral Degree (MQF Level 8).

Modes of Study

This Programme Standards will only cover and consider the following modes of study:

- **Diploma (MQF level 4)**

  By coursework only

- **Bachelor's Degree (MQF Level 6)**

  By coursework only

- **Postgraduate Diploma (MQF Level 7)**

  By coursework with research component

- **Master's Degree (MQF Level 7)**

  By research, coursework, and mixed mode (coursework & research)

- **Doctoral Degree (MQF Level 8)**

  By research, coursework, and mixed mode (coursework & research)

Programme Nomenclature

All Diploma and Bachelor's Degree programmes should only be generic degrees without specialisation (e.g. Diploma in Psychology, Bachelor of Psychology).

For **Bachelor's Degree** the following may be applicable:

i. **Single Major (at least 60 credits in psychology)**

   E.g. Bachelor of Psychology, Bachelor of Social Science (Hons) Psychology, or Bachelor of Science (Hons) Psychology, and Bachelor of Art (Hons) Psychology.

ii. **Double major (at least 60 credits in each area)**

   E.g. Bachelor of Psychology and Business, Bachelor of Communication and Psychology, and Bachelor of Arts (Sociology and Psychology).

iii. **Minor in Psychology (at least 30 credits in psychology)**

   E.g. Bachelor of Business with Psychology, and Bachelor of Social Sciences with Psychology.

For Postgraduate Diploma, the only acceptable qualification is either Postgraduate Diploma (Psychology) or Postgraduate Diploma (Applied Psychology).

Specialisation within Psychology only applies to Master's degree and above

Master's Degree:
e.g. Master of Arts (Psychology), Master of Social Science (Counselling Psychology), Master of Science (Cognitive Neuropsychology), Master of Psychology (Educational Psychology), Master of Clinical Psychology, Master in Cognitive Psychology, etc.

Doctoral Degree:
e.g. Doctor of Philosophy (PhD or DPhil) in [state the specialisation], Doctor of Psychology (PsyD, DPsych or PsychD) [state the specialisation], Doctor of Education (EdD) in Psychology, Doctor of Clinical Psychology (DClinPsy), etc.

PROGRAMME AIMS AND LEARNING OUTCOMES

"A programme's stated aims, objectives and learning outcomes reflect what it wants the learner to achieve. It is crucial for these aims to be expressed explicitly and be made known to learners and other stakeholders alike" (COPPA, 2008, pp.10).

"The quality of programme is ultimately assessed by the ability of the learner to carry out their expected roles and responsibilities in society. This requires the programme to have a clear statement of the learning outcomes to be achieved by the learner" (COPPA, 2008, pp.11).

Learning outcomes are more detailed statements described in explicit term of learners' achievement that are achievable and assessable upon completion of a period of study. The following learning outcomes should be read together with the eight domains of learning outcomes as stated in MQF (2007) when designing the programme learning outcomes. Normally, learning outcomes are expressed by "At the end of the programme, graduates will be able to...".

DIPLOMA

The diploma programme aims to provide learners with knowledge and understanding in psychology at elementary level. The programme is meant to prepare students to function effectively as a technical assistant in various works settings such as psychology laboratories, childcare centres, homes for aged, welfare agencies, etc.

At the end of the diploma programme, graduates will be able to:

i.   use basic knowledge in psychology to perform a range of support tasks related to research in, and the practice of psychology;

ii.   exhibit interpersonal, teamwork, organisational and social skills that are appropriate to relevant work setting;

iii. communicate effectively with co-workers, clients, superiors and society at large;

iv.   discuss and solve basic problems related to psychological phenomena; and

v.   utilise techniques and capabilities to search for and use literature for personal purpose or in assisting psychology instructors/researchers/ practitioners.

BACHELOR'S DEGREE

The aim of the bachelor's programme in psychology is to offer students a solid foundation of core psychological principles and expose them to a broad cross-section of topics within basic and applied psychology. The programme will help students develop research and communication skills, and attain strong background in psychology as a science. The programme also aims to foster critical thinking amongst the students to address evolving issues related to education, work, health-care, and everyday life.

At the end of the bachelor's programme, graduates will be able to:

i.   demonstrate knowledge and understanding on fundamental principles in psychology, acquired from scholarly sources;

ii. apply basic research methods in psychology, including research design, data analysis and interpretation, in a range of work settings;

iii. use critical and creative thinking, sceptical inquiry, and when possible, the scientific approach to solve problems related to behaviour and mental processes;

iv. apply psychological principles by explaining and suggesting solutions to personal, organisational, and social problems, taking into consideration self-understanding, socio-cultural aspects and international diversity;

v.   apply ethical principles in all aspect of the science and practice of psychology, including knowing the limitations of their psychological knowledge and skills; and

vi. communicate and convey information, ideas, problems and solutions effectively to the general public.

POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA

Postgraduate diploma can be offered in order to bridge the bachelor's and master's qualifications. It aims to provide graduates with advanced knowledge and skills in selected areas in a specialised field of psychology.

At the end of the postgraduate diploma programme, graduates will be able to:

i.   demonstrate additional and continuing knowledge and understanding of psychology above that of the bachelor's degree;

ii.   use the knowledge and understanding of specialised area in psychology in relevant work setting;

iii.   integrate knowledge and skills to manage complex matters in their areas of study;

iv.   apply psychological principles by explaining and suggesting solutions to personal, organisational, and social problems, taking into consideration self-understanding, socio-cultural aspects and international diversity;

v.   apply ethical principles in all aspect of the science and practice of psychology, including knowing the limitations of their psychological knowledge and skills; and

vi.   communicate and convey information, ideas, problems and solution effectively to the general public and professional community.

MASTER'S DEGREE

The master's degree programme aims to provide graduates with the advanced knowledge and skills in a specialised area in psychology.

At the end of the *master's degree by coursework or mixed mode* programme, graduates will be able to:

i.   demonstrate continuing and additional knowledge and understanding of psychology above that of the bachelor's degree and have capabilities to develop or use ideas, usually in the context of research;

ii.   show capabilities to generate, design, implement and adopt the integral part of research processes in specialised areas in psychology in a scientific manner;

iii. integrate knowledge and skills in specialised areas to manage complex matters and novel situations in multi-disciplinary context;

iv. apply psychological principles by explaining and suggesting solutions to personal, organisational and social issues including self-understanding, and socio-cultural and international diversity;

v. evaluate and make decision even in situations with limited information by considering social responsibilities and ethics outlined by professional bodies in psychology;

vi. communicate and convey information, ideas, problems and solution effectively to the general public and professional community; and

vii. demonstrate leadership qualities through communicating and working effectively with peers and stakeholders.

At the end of the *master's degree by research* programme, graduates will be able to:

i. show a systematic comprehension of a specific issue in psychology and mastery of skills and research methods related to that issue;

ii. show capabilities to generate, design, implement and adopt the integral part of research processes in specific areas in psychology in a scientific manner;

iii. produce an empirical research that can contribute to the knowledge of psychology through an in-depth dissertation, which has been presented and defended according to the national standard;

iv. make critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of complex ideas in psychology;

v. communicate with peers, scholarly communities and society at large concerning psychology and the specialised area; and

vi. promote the technological, social, and cultural progress in academic contexts.

DOCTORAL DEGREE

The doctoral degree programme aims to prepare graduates with the ability to carry out scholarly applied research independently at the forefront of their specialised field in psychology and become experts who facilitate and contribute to the advancement of new knowledge.

At the end of the doctoral degree programme, graduates will be able to:

i. show a systematic comprehension and in-depth understanding of a specific issue in psychology and mastery of relevant skills and research methods;

ii. show capabilities to generate, design, implement and adopt the integral part of research processes in specific areas of psychology with scholarly strength;

iii. produce the original research that has broadened the boundary of knowledge of psychology through an in-depth dissertation, which has been presented and defended according to the international standard;

iv. make critical analysis, evaluation and synthesis of new and complex ideas in psychology;

v. communicate with peers, scholarly communities and society at large concerning psychology and the specialised area; and

vi. promote the technological, social, and cultural progress in academic and professional contexts.

vii. [additional learning outcome for applied psychology programme] solve a range of complex problems related to the field of specialization by applying consultation, management and supervision skills.

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CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DELIVERY

For the purpose of this document, programmes offered by higher education providers will have the term 'curriculum design and delivery' used interchangeably with 'programme design and delivery.' 'Programme' means an arrangement of courses that are structured for a specified duration and learning volume to achieve the stated learning outcomes, usually leading to an award of a qualification (COPPA, 2008, pp.14).

INTRODUCTION TO CURRICULUM DESIGN AND DELIVERY

In general, psychology programmes should consist of a comprehensive coverage of Psychology coursework, particularly at the levels of certificate through bachelor. For advanced levels of psychology education (master's and doctoral), there is normally fieldwork/practical training AND/OR thesis/dissertation.

(A) Coursework

For coursework at diploma through bachelor's degree levels, programmes must include the following 8 Knowledge Areas:

Minimum Credits Per Knowledge Area (for Discipline Core/Elective)

Knowledge Areas in Psychology	Diploma	Bachelor's
a. Scientific Inquiry e.g. Introduction to Psychology, Research Method, Statistics, Test & Measurement	9 – 12	12 – 15
b. Biological Basis of Behaviour e.g. (Biological/Physiological Psychology) Basis of Behaviour, Sensation, Perception & Consciousness	3 – 6	3 – 9

Knowledge Areas in Psychology	Diploma	Bachelor's
c. Human Development e.g. Lifespan Development, Child Psychology, Adolescent Psychology, Psychology of Adulthood and Ageing	3 – 6	3 – 9
d. Cognitive-Affective Basis of Behaviour e.g. Memory, Thinking & Intelligence, Learning, Language dan Perception	3 – 6	3 – 9
e. Individual Differences e.g. Personality, Motivation & Emotions, Abnormal Psychology, Intelligence and Test & Measurement	3 – 6	6 – 9
f. Social-Cultural Context of Behaviour e.g. Social Psychology, Disability Issues, Cross-Cultural Psychology, etc.	3 – 6	3 – 9
g. Value in Psychology e.g. History & Systems in Psychology, Ethics in Psychology, etc.	3 – 6	3 – 9
h. Application of Psychological Science e.g. Introduction to Industrial and Organisational Psychology, Health Psychology, Clinical Psychology, Counselling Psychology, Educational Psychology, etc.	3 – 6	6 – 15
MINIMUM CREDIT	**45**	**60**

(B) Supervised Fieldwork

Supervised fieldwork is important in psychology programmes. This can take the forms of industrial training or practicum/internship. At the bachelor's degree level, industrial training is required.

Some examples of industrial training may include community service or placement at NGOs (e.g. working with people with disabilities, elderly people, prisoners, drug addicts, orphans, etc.), attachment with human resource departments within corporate organisation, and community based project, etc.

Industrial training should consist of at least 480 hours of learning experience (inclusive of time spent in on-campus preparation) and may be done in two ways:

i.   continuous placement of at least 3 months in an organisation; OR
ii.   a series of short placement in organisation(s) staggered throughout the course of study.

Practicum/internship refers to more structured training at the postgraduate level in a specialised area e.g. clinical psychology, counselling psychology, industrial/ organisational psychology. Supervisors must be appropriately credentialed in the specialised field.

CURRICULUM STRUCTURE

DIPLOMA

MINIMUM GRADUATING CREDIT – 90		
COMPONENT	PERCENTAGE (%)	CREDITS
Compulsory Modules/General Studies	10 – 14	9 – 12
Common Core	24 – 40	21 – 36
Discipline Core*	50 – 57	45 – 51
Industrial Training	0 – 7	0 – 6

* Discipline core must cover all 8 Knowledge Areas highlighted in page 13 – 14.

Suggested Discipline Core: Introduction to Psychology, Basic Research Methods, Basic Statistics, Basic Test & Measurement, Abnormal Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Personality Psychology, Physiological Psychology, Social Psychology, etc.

BACHELOR'S DEGREE

MINIMUM GRADUATING CREDIT – 120		
COMPONENT	PERCENTAGE (%)	CREDITS
Compulsory Modules/General Studies	10 – 13	12 – 15
Common Core	18 – 30	21 – 36
Discipline Core*: Coursework	38 – 50	45 – 60
Discipline Core: Research Project	5 – 8	6 – 9
Discipline Core**: Industrial Training	5 – 13	6 – 12
Electives	0 – 23	0 – 27

 *Discipline core must cover all 8 Knowledge Areas highlighted in page 13 – 14.

** HEPs may offer fieldwork or industrial training as part of coursework.

Suggested Discipline Core: Introduction to Psychology, Research Methods, Statistics, Test & Measurement, Abnormal Psychology, Cognitive Psychology, Developmental Psychology, Personality Psychology, Physiological Psychology, Social Psychology, etc.

Suggested Discipline Elective: Any other areas in psychology or a sequence of the core courses.

POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA

MINIMUM GRADUATING CREDIT – 30		
COMPONENT	PERCENTAGE (%)	CREDITS
Compulsory Modules	0 – 10	0 – 3
Common Core	0 – 50	0 – 15
Discipline Core and Discipline Elective	40 – 70	12 – 21
Practicum, Industrial Training*	0 – 30	0 – 9
Research Project	10 – 30	3 – 9

*Note: All applied psychology programmes must include at least 3 credits of supervised practicum.

Suggested Discipline Core: Intermediate Research Methods, Intermediate Statistics, Intermediate Psychometrics, Professional & Ethical Issues, etc.

Suggested Discipline Elective: At least 4 courses in a specialised area in psychology.

All postgraduate level programmes should include competencies **a to d** while the remaining competencies are considered as optional.

Applied areas such as clinical psychology, counselling psychology, educational psychology, forensic psychology, health psychology, industrial/ organisational psychology, school psychology and sports psychology programmes at masters level must include competencies **a to f**, while at doctoral level it should include all competencies listed below:

a. Knowledge of the discipline
b. Ethical, legal and professional issues
c. Psychological measurement and assessment
d. Research and evaluation skills
e. Intervention methods/strategies
f. Communication and interpersonal relationships
g. Consultation, management and supervision

MASTER'S DEGREE BY COURSEWORK (for all master's programmes except the applied areas)

MINIMUM GRADUATING CREDIT – 40		
COMPONENT	PERCENTAGE (%)	CREDITS
Coursework*	70 – 80	28 – 32
Research Project	20 – 30	8 – 12

*Coursework must cover all 4 competencies (a-d) as highlighted above.

MASTER'S DEGREE BY MIXED MODE (for all master's programmes except the applied areas)

MINIMUM GRADUATING CREDIT – 40		
COMPONENT	PERCENTAGE	CREDITS
Coursework*	30 – 50	12 – 20
Dissertation	50 – 70	20 – 28

*Coursework must cover all 4 competencies (a-d) as highlighted above.

MASTER'S DEGREE BY COURSEWORK (for all APPLIED areas)

MINIMUM GRADUATING CREDIT – 48		
COMPONENT	PERCENTAGE (%)	CREDITS
Coursework*	40 – 50	19 – 24
Practicum/Internship**	25 – 30	12 – 14
Research Project	20 – 30	7 – 14

*Coursework must cover all 6 competencies (a-f) as highlighted in page 18.

** Minimum practicum hours is 1000. At least 30 – 40% of the practicum hours must be on face-to-face direct client contact. Total supervision hours should be at least half (50%) of the direct service hours.

Suggested Coursework: Intermediate Research Methods, Intermediate Statistics, Intermediate Psychometrics, Professional & Ethical Issues, and other relevant courses in specialised areas in psychology.

MASTER'S DEGREE BY RESEARCH

NO GIVEN CREDIT VALUE

DOCTORAL DEGREE BY RESEARCH (PhD)

NO GIVEN CREDIT VALUE

DOCTORAL DEGREE BY MIXED MODE (for all doctoral programmes except the applied areas)

MINIMUM GRADUATING CREDIT – 80		
COMPONENT	PERCENTAGE	CREDITS
Coursework*	30 – 50	24 – 40
Practicum/Internship	0 – 20	0 – 16
Dissertation	50 – 70	40 – 56

 * Coursework must cover all 4 competencies (a-d) highlighted in page 18.

DOCTORAL DEGREE BY COURSEWORK (for all APPLIED areas)

MINIMUM GRADUATING CREDIT – 80		
COMPONENT	PERCENTAGE (%)	CREDITS
Coursework*	40 – 50	32 – 40
Practicum/Internship	20 – 25	16 – 20
Research Project	20 – 40	16 – 32

* Coursework must cover all 7 competencies (a-g) highlighted in page 18.

Suggested Coursework: Advanced Research Methods, Advanced Statistics, or research method in a specific sub-discipline.

Instructional Methods for Psychology Education

Psychology academicians should apply psychological principles and knowledge in the teaching-learning of psychology.

Traditionally, lectures are a reasonably effective means of communicating information, but less effective at encouraging critical thinking, changing attitudes and acquiring skills.

To attain other objectives (i.e. promote critical thinking in students, change students' attitudes and help students develop specific skills), alternative instructional methods are required, for example:

- problem-based learning
- technology-aided instruction/learning
- case studies/case discussions
- group activities (e.g. discussions, debates, presentations, etc.)
- role-plays
- fieldwork or industrial training
- individual or group supervision
- independent study
- hybrid or blended learning (a mixture of classroom and online instructions)
- modular-based classes
- project based learning
- workshop
- seminar
- laboratory experiment

ASSESSMENT OF STUDENTS

*"*Student assessment is a crucial aspect of quality assurance because it drives student learning. It is one of the most important measures to show the achievement of learning outcomes. The result of assessment is also the basis in awarding qualifications. Hence, methods of student assessment have to be clear, consistent, effective, reliable and in line with current practices and must clearly support the achievement of learning outcomes" (COPPA, 2008, p.15). The HEPs need to show how the assessment methods link to the achievement of programme/course learning outcomes.

Specific methods of assessment will depend on the specific requirements of each module. However, as a general guide, the following must be considered:

- summative and formative assessments should be used;
- knowledge and understanding (the cognitive domain) should be tested through written, oral or other suitable means but practical skills should be tested by practical evaluation such as laboratory tests;
- in modules requiring practical skills, pass in practical evaluation is compulsory (a pass implies that the examiner is satisfied that the candidate has met the learning outcomes of the particular subject);
- the types of assessments indicated are merely examples. HEPs are encouraged to use a variety of methods and tools appropriate for the learning outcomes and competencies; and
- in relation to continuous and final evaluation, candidates are required to achieve a pass in both (a pass implies that the examiner is satisfied that the candidate has met the learning outcomes of the particular subject).

Generally, students shall be evaluated, where appropriate, through:

- Examination
  – Close/Open book, Viva Voce, Mid Term, Semester Final, Take-home Exam;

- Coursework
  – Assignments, Quiz, Laboratory Report;

- Projects
  – Individual/Group, Long/Short; and

- Others
  – Class Participation, Group Activities.

The following types of assessment indicated are merely examples. HEPs are encouraged to use a variety of methods and tools appropriate for measuring learning outcomes and competencies.

Qualifications	Continuous Assessment (%)	Final Assessment * (%)	Assessment Level	Appropriate Forms of Assessment Suggested
Diploma	30 – 70	30 – 70	Knowledge, understanding and application	- Individual/group assignment - Quiz - Written/oral test (e.g. presentation) - Mid-term examination - Final examination (written/oral)

Qualifications	Continuous Assessment (%)	Final Assessment * (%)	Assessment Level	Appropriate Forms of Assessment Suggested
Bachelor's Degree	40 – 60	40 – 60	Knowledge, understanding, application and analysis	- Individual/group assignment - Practical assessment - Oral test - Project - Presentation - Written/oral test (e.g. presentation) - Final examination (written/oral) - Industrial attachment - Undergraduate project - Quiz
Postgraduate Diploma	40 – 60	40 – 60	Knowledge, understanding, application, analysis and synthesis	- Individual/group assignment - Practical assessment - Practicum/internship (for applied psychology) - Oral test - Project - Presentation - Written/oral test (e.g. Presentation) - Final examination (written/oral)

Qualifications	Continuous Assessment (%)	Final Assessment * (%)	Assessment Level	Appropriate Forms of Assessment Suggested
Master's Degree by Coursework	40 – 60	40 – 60	Knowledge, understanding, application, analysis and synthesis	- Individual/group assignment - Viva voce (one seminar) - Presentation - Seminar work (one seminar proceeding) - Practical assessment - Supervised practicum (for applied psychology) - Final examination (written/oral) - Comprehensive exam - Competency evaluation - Research project
Master's Degree by Research	-	100	Knowledge, understanding, application, analysis and synthesis	- Viva voce - Presentation - Seminar work (two seminar proceedings) - Individual/group assignment - Dissertation (2 examiners, one of whom is an external examiner)

Qualifications	Continuous Assessment (%)	Final Assessment * (%)	Assessment Level	Appropriate Forms of Assessment Suggested
Master's Degree by Mixed Mode	40 – 60	40 – 60	Knowledge, understanding, application, analysis and synthesis	- Individual/group assignment - Viva-voce (one seminar) - Presentation - Seminar work (one seminar proceeding) - Practical assessment - Supervised practicum (for applied psychology) - Final examination (written/oral) - Comprehensive exam - Competency evaluation - Dissertation (two examiners)
Doctoral Degree by Research	-	100	Knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation	- Thesis (3 examiners, 2 of whom are external examiners) - Viva voce - Presentation - Seminar work (two refereed journal article)

Qualifications	Continuous Assessment (%)	Final Assessment * (%)	Assessment Level	Appropriate Forms of Assessment Suggested
Doctoral Degree by Mixed Mode	40 – 60	40 – 60	Knowledge, understanding, application, analysis, synthesis and evaluation	- Individual/group assignment - Viva voce (one seminar) - Presentation - Seminar work (one seminar proceeding) - Practical assessment - Supervised practicum (for applied psychology) - Final examination (written/oral) - Comprehensive exam - Practitioner competency evaluation - Thesis (2 examiners, one of whom is an external examiner)

Note

- **Assessment moderation**: the HEP is required to form a moderation committee to vet all assessments (continuous or final) that have at least 30% of weighting.

- For additional information on assessment, please refer to the 'Guidelines to Good Practices: Assessment of Student Learning'.

- The Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains is attached in Appendix 2.
- Some courses may not have final examination such as skill based courses (eg. lab-based statistics, clinical interview, industrial training, practicum/internship, research project, dissertation, thesis etc.). As such, the evaluation will be based on 100% continuous assessment.

STUDENT SELECTION

This section of the Programme Standards concerns the recruitment of students into the individual programme of study. In general, admission policies of the programme need to comply with the prevailing policies of the Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (MOHE), "There are varying views on the best method of student selection. Whatever the method used, HEP must be able to defend its consistency. The number of students to be admitted to the programme is determined by the capacity of the HEP and the number of qualified applicants. HEP admission and retention policies must not be compromised for the sole purpose of maintaining a desired enrolment. If a HEP operates geographically separated campuses or if the programme is a collaborative one, the selection and assignment of all students must be consistent with national policies" (COPPA, 2008, pp.17).

The standards are created keeping in mind the generic national higher education policies pertaining to minimum student entry requirement. Higher education providers must take cognisance of any specific policies that may apply to their individual institution.

The minimum standards for recruitment of students into Psychology Programmes are provided below:

DIPLOMA

i.   A pass in *Sijil Pelajaran Malaysia* (SPM) or its equivalent with at least 3 credits in any subject and a pass in Mathematics and Science;
OR

ii.   A pass in *Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia* (STPM) or its equivalent with at least 1 full pass with CGPA 2.00 and a pass in, Mathematics and Science at SPM level;
OR

iii.   Other relevant or equivalent qualification, experience and requirement accepted by the HEP Senate/competent authority in Malaysia.

BACHELOR'S DEGREE

i.   Matriculation or Foundation or its equivalent with a minimum CGPA 2.00 out of 4.00;

    OR

ii.   *Sijil Tinggi Persekolahan Malaysia* (STPM) or its equivalent with a minimum of 2 full passes with CGPA 2.00;

    OR

iii.   A Diploma or its equivalent with minimum CGPA 2.00 out of 4.00;

    (Note**:** All the above qualifications need to be supported with at least credits in Mathematics and Science and a pass in English at SPM level)

    OR

iv.   A Diploma in Psychology with minimum CGPA 2.00 out of 4.00;

    OR

v.   Other relevant or equivalent qualification, experience and requirement accepted by the HEP Senate/competent authority in Malaysia.

POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA

i.   A Bachelor's Degree in Psychology or its equivalent with minimum CGPA 2.50 out of 4.00;

    OR

ii.   A Bachelor's Degree with minimum CGPA 2.50 out of 4.00 in any field, **AND** a minimum 45 credits of prerequisites modules in Psychology or its equivalent (covering all 8 Knowledge Areas highlighted in page 13 – 14) with a minimum CGPA 2.50 out of 4.00 in the prerequisites modules;

    OR

iii.   A Bachelor's Degree with minimum CGPA 2.50 out of 4.00 in any field, **AND** a minimum 30 credits of prerequisites modules in Psychology or its equivalent (covering all 8 Knowledge Areas highlighted in page 13 – 14) with a minimum CGPA 2.50 out of 4.00 in the prerequisites modules, **AND** a Graduate Record Examination (GRE) Subject Test (Psychology) with a minimum score of 550;

    OR

iv. A Bachelor's Degree in Psychology not meeting CGPA of 2.50 can be accepted subject to relevant work experience and rigorous internal assessment by an independent review panel;
OR

v. Other relevant or equivalent qualification, experience and requirement accepted by the HEP Senate/competent authority in Malaysia.

MASTER'S DEGREE BY COURSEWORK/MIXED MODE

i. A Bachelor's Degree in Psychology or its equivalent with minimum CGPA 2.75 out of 4.00;
Note: A Bachelor's Degree in Psychology not meeting CGPA of 2.75 (but not lower than 2.5) can be accepted subject to rigorous internal assessment by an independent review panel.
OR

ii. A Bachelor's Degree with minimum CGPA 2.75 out of 4.00 in any field, **AND** a minimum 45 credits of prerequisites modules in Psychology or its equivalent (covering all eight Knowledge Areas highlighted in page 13 – 14) with a minimum CGPA 2.75 out of 4.00 in the prerequisites modules;
OR

iii. A Bachelor's Degree with minimum CGPA 2.75 out of 4.00 in any field, **AND** a minimum 30 credits of prerequisites modules in Psychology or its equivalent (covering all eight Knowledge Areas highlighted in page 13 -14) with a minimum CGPA 2.75 out of 4.00 in the prerequisites modules, **AND** a Graduate Record Examination (GRE) Subject Test (Psychology) with a minimum score of 550;
OR

iv. Other relevant or equivalent qualification, experience and requirement accepted by the HEP Senate/competent authority in Malaysia.

MASTER'S DEGREE BY RESEARCH

i. A Bachelor's Degree in Psychology or its equivalent with minimum CGPA 2.75 out of 4.00;

OR

ii. A Bachelor's Degree with minimum CGPA 2.75 out of 4.00 in any field, **AND** a minimum 45 credits of prerequisites modules in Psychology or its equivalent (covering all eight Knowledge Areas highlighted in page 13 – 14) and an undergraduate research project with a minimum CGPA 2.75 out of 4.00 in the prerequisites modules;

OR

iii. A Bachelor's Degree with minimum CGPA 2.75 out of 4.00 in any field, **AND** a minimum 30 credits of prerequisites modules in Psychology or its equivalent (covering all eight Knowledge Areas highlighted in page 13 – 14) with a minimum CGPA 2.75 out of 4.00 in the prerequisites modules, **AND** a Graduate Record Examination (GRE) Subject Test (Psychology) with a minimum score of 550;

OR

iv. Other relevant or equivalent qualification, experience and requirement accepted by the HEP Senate/competent authority in Malaysia.

DOCTORAL DEGREE

i. A master's degree in Psychology;

OR

ii. Other relevant or equivalent qualification, experience and requirement accepted by the HEP Senate/competent authority in Malaysia.

Note:

1. There shall be no direct entry from bachelor's degree level to doctoral degree level

2. Candidates registered for master's degree programmes with at least CGPA 3.67 may apply to convert their candidacy to the doctoral degree programmes subjected to:

   - having shown competency and capability in conducting research at doctoral degree level
   - approval by the HEP Senate.

ACADEMIC STAFF

"The quality of the academic staff is one of the most important components in assuring the quality of higher education and thus every effort must be made to establish proper and effective recruitment, service, development and appraisal policies that are conducive to staff productivity" (COPPA, 2008, pp.21).

This section contains benchmarked statements pertaining to the recruitment of academic staff.

DIPLOMA IN PSYCHOLOGY

Academic staff qualification
1. Bachelor's degree in psychology.
2. Holders of non-psychology bachelor's degree should only teach within their areas of study. These staff should not exceed 40% of the overall number of staff.

Academic staff ratio
- At least 60% of staff must be full-time.

Staff-student ratio
- Overall staff-student ratio – 1:30

BACHELOR'S DEGREE

Academic staff qualification
1. Master's/doctoral degree in psychology.
2. Holders of master's/doctoral degree in psychology but with a non-psychology bachelor's degree should only teach within their areas of expertise.
3. Holders of master's/doctoral degree in non-psychology area may be employed to teach within their areas of expertise (e.g. statistics, psychopharmacology, management, etc.).
4. Combined number of staff mentioned in item 2 and 3 above should not exceed 40% of the overall number of staff.

Academic staff ratio

- At least 60% of staff must be full-time.

Staff-student ratio

- Overall Staff - Student ratio – 1:25

POSTGRADUATE DIPLOMA AND MASTER'S DEGREE BY COURSEWORK/ MIXED MODE

Academic staff qualification

1. Doctoral Degree in the relevant and specialised areas in Psychology;
   OR
2. Master's Degree in the relevant and specialised areas in Psychology with at least 5 years experience in teaching and research or as a co-supervisor.
3. Holders of Master's/Doctoral Degree in non-Psychology area may be employed to teach within their areas of expertise (e.g. Statistics, Psychopharmacology, Management, etc.). These staff should not exceed 40% of the overall number of staff
4. The principal project supervisor must be a full-time lecturer of the HEP.

Academic staff ratio

- At least 60% of staff must be full-time

Staff-student ratio

- Overall staff to student ratio – 1: 12

MASTER'S DEGREE BY RESEARCH

Academic staff qualification

1. **Doctoral Degree** in relevant specialised areas in Psychology;
   OR
2. **Master's Degree** in relevant specialised areas in Psychology with 5 years of relevant experience in teaching and research, or as a co-supervisor.

However, academics holding Master's Degree with less than 5 years of research experience can be appointed as co-supervisors.

3. The principal project supervisor must be a full-time lecturer of the HEP.

DOCTORAL DEGREE

Academic staff qualification

1. **Doctoral Degree** in the relevant specialised areas in Psychology with 2 years experience in teaching and research; or as a co-supervisor. Doctoral Degree holders without postgraduate research supervision experience should be supported and mentored by experienced peers.
2. The principal project supervisor must be a full-time lecturer of the HEP.

Academic staff ratio

- At least 60% of staff must be full-time

Staff-student ratio

- Overall staff to student ratio – 1: 12

STAFF DEVELOPMENT

- Continuous Professional Development (CPD) for full-time staff according to the specialisation needs with at least 7 days training per year of relevant training.

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES

"Adequate educational resources are necessary to support the teaching-learning activities of the programme. These resources include finance, expertise, physical infrastructure, information and communication technology, and research facilities. The physical facilities of a programme are largely guided by the needs of the specific field of study" (COPPA, 2008, pp.23).

For a psychology programme, HEPs are required to provide sufficient resources to support teaching and learning as suggested below:

i. Suitable teaching and learning spaces (with sufficient audio visual facilities and appropriate technologies) in sufficient numbers and size to permit reasonable scheduling for all classes and to provide opportunities for learners to use such facilities and technologies.
    For example:
    - lecture hall
    - tutorial rooms

ii. Sufficient space suitable for individual or group study and other forms of collaborative work.
    For example:
    - library
    - discussion room
    - postgraduate lounge

iii. Specialised laboratories according to the needs of the programme.
    For example:
    - counselling rooms (individual, group)
    - experimental laboratory
    - observation room
    Note: CCTV and/or one way mirror is required for observation and supervision purposes.

iv. HEPs are required to provide sufficient resources to support teaching and learning.

For example:

- psychological test library
- computer laboratory (with related statistical software)
- relevant books and journals (hard copies and/or online)
- internet access

HEPs are required to provide sufficient numbers of qualified technical support staff with at least a diploma in psychology to support the teaching and learning activities of the programme (such as psychology lab officer and laboratory assistant).

PROGRAMME MONITORING AND REVIEW

"Quality enhancement calls for programmes to be regularly monitored, reviewed and evaluated. This includes the monitoring, reviewing and evaluating of institutional structures and processes (administrative structure, leadership and governance, planning and review mechanisms), curriculum components (teaching methodologies, learning outcomes) as well as student progress, employability and performance.

Feedback from multiple sources students, alumni, academic staff, employers, professional bodies, parents assist in enhancing the quality of the programme. Feedback can also be obtained from an analysis of student performance and from longitudinal studies.

Measures of student performances would include the average study duration, assessment scores, passing rate of examinations, success and dropout rates, students' and alumni's reports about their learning experience, as well as time spent by students in areas of special interest. Evaluation of student performance in examinations can reveal very useful information. If student selection has been correctly done, a high failure rate in a programme indicates something amiss in the curriculum content, teaching-learning activities or assessment system. The programme committees need to monitor the performance rate in each programme and investigate if the rate is too high or too low.

Student feedback, for example, through questionnaires and representation in programme committees, is useful for identifying specific problems and for continual improvement of the programme.

One method to evaluate programme effectiveness is a longitudinal study of the graduates. The department should have mechanisms for monitoring the performance of its graduates and for obtaining the perceptions of society and employers on the strength and weaknesses of the graduates and to respond appropriately" (COPPA, 2008, pp.27).

LEADERSHIP, GOVERNANCE AND ADMINISTRATION

"There are many ways of administering an educational institution and the methods of management differ between HEPs. Nevertheless, governance that reflects the leadership of an academic organisation must emphasise excellence and scholarship. At the departmental level, it is crucial that the leadership provides clear guidelines and direction, builds relationships amongst the different constituents based on collegiality and transparency, manages finances and other resources with accountability, forge partnerships with significant stakeholders in educational delivery, research and consultancy and dedicates itself to academic and scholarly endeavours. Whilst formalised arrangements can protect these relationships, they are best developed by a culture of reciprocity, mutuality and open communication" (COPPA, 2008, pp. 28).

Specific to the level offered at the HEPs, the programme leadership (e.g., Coordinator, Head or Dean of programme) must have the following minimum qualification and experience:

DIPLOMA
A bachelor's degree in psychology or a related area.

BACHELOR'S DEGREE
A master's degree in psychology or a related field, with a bachelor's degree in psychology.

MASTER'S DEGREE
A doctoral degree, with at least a postgraduate degree in psychology or a related area;
OR
A master's degree in psychology with 5 years of relevant experience.

DOCTORAL DEGREE
A doctoral degree, with at least a postgraduate degree in psychology or a related area, with at least 3 years of post doctoral work experience.

CONTINUAL QUALITY IMPROVEMENT

"Increasingly, society demands greater accountability from HEPs. Needs are constantly changing because of the advancements in science and technology, and the explosive growth in global knowledge, which are rapidly and widely disseminated. In facing these challenges, HEPs have little choice but to become dynamic learning organisations that need to continually and systematically review and monitor the various issues so as to meet the demands of the constantly changing environment" (COPPA, 2008, pp.30-31).

The Higher Education Providers (HEPs) are expected to provide evidence of the ability to keep pace with changes in the field and the requirements of stakeholders. These may be demonstrated by, but not limited to:

i. an annual module/unit/course/subject review;

ii. a programme curriculum review, conducted at least once every 3 - 5 years;

iii. the appointment of an external reviewer/industrial adviser for quality assessment processes;

iv. a continuous review of industrial attachment practices and records;

v. dialogue sessions with stakeholders;

vi. an active participation of academic staff at relevant conferences, seminars, workshops and short courses;

vii. presentations by invited local or international speakers;

viii. the organisation of conferences, seminars and workshops; and

ix. involvement of current students, alumni, staff, external academics, industrial experts and employers in the quality review process.

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LIST OF PANEL MEMBERS

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NO	PANEL	ORGANISATION
1.	Rahmattullah Khan Abdul Wahab Khan (Prof. Dr.) *-Chairman -*	Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris
2.	Alizi bin Alias (Assistant Professor Dr.)	International Islamic University Malaysia
3.	Fatimah Omar (Associate Prof. Dr.)	Universiti Kebangsaan Malaysia
4.	Hairul Nizam Ismail (Associate Prof. Dr.)	Universiti Sains Malaysia
5.	Ng Wai Sheng (Dr.)	Columbia Asia Hospital, Seremban
6.	Shamsul Haque (Associate Prof. Dr.)	Monash University, Sunway Campus

BLOOM'S TAXONOMY

Examples and Key Words for Bloom's Taxonomy of Learning Domains are as follows:

Category	Examples and Key Words (verbs)
Knowledge: Recall data or information.	**Examples**: Recite a policy. Quote prices from memory to a customer. Know the safety rules. **Key Words**: defines, describes, identifies, labels, lists, matches, names, outlines, recalls, reproduces, selects, states.
Comprehension: Understand the meaning, translation, interpolation, and interpretation of instructions and problems. State a problem in one's own words.	**Examples**: Rewrite the principles of test writing. Explain in one's own words the steps for performing a complex task. **Key Words**: comprehends, converts, defends, distinguishes, estimates, explains, extends, generalises, gives an example, interprets, paraphrases, predicts, rewrites, summarises, translates.
Application: Use a concept in a new situation. Apply what was learned in the classroom into novel situations in the work place.	**Examples**: Use a manual to calculate an employee's vacation time. Apply laws of statistics to evaluate the reliability of a written test. **Key Words**: applies, changes, computes, constructs, demonstrates, discovers, manipulates, modifies, operates, predicts, prepares, produces, relates, shows, solves, uses.

Category	*Examples and Key Words (verbs)*
Analysis: Separate material or concepts into component parts so that its organisational structure may be understood. Distinguish between facts and inferences.	**Examples**: Troubleshoot a piece of equipment by using logical deduction. Recognise logical fallacies in reasoning. Gather information from a department and select the required tasks for training. **Key Words**: analyses, breaks down, compares, contrasts, diagrams, deconstructs, differentiates, discriminates, distinguishes, identifies, illustrates, infers, outlines, relates, selects, separates.
Synthesis: Build a structure or pattern from diverse elements. Put parts together to form a whole, with emphasis on creating a new meaning or structure.	**Examples**: Write a company operations or process manual. Design a machine to perform a specific task. Integrate training from several sources to solve a problem. Revise and process to improve the outcome. **Key Words**: categorises, combines, compiles, composes, creates, devises, designs, explains, generates, modifies, organises, plans, rearranges, reconstructs, relates, reorganises, revises, rewrites, summarises, tells, writes.
Evaluation: Make judgments about the value of ideas or materials.	**Examples**: Select the most effective solution. Hire the most qualified candidate. Explain and justify a new budget. **Key Words**: appraises, compares, concludes, contrasts, criticises, critiques, defends, describes, discriminates, evaluates, explains, interprets, justifies, relates, summarises, supports.

Source: http://www.nwlink.com/~donclark/hrd/bloom.html