

Psychology Comprehensive Exam

The Psychology Comprehensive Exam (PCE) is part of the Department of Psychology's efforts to improve the quality of its curriculum; consequently, **your participation is very important** to the Department!

Frequently Asked Questions

1. Do I HAVE to take the PCE?
 - Yes. Beginning with the Fall 2007 catalog, a Senior Exit Evaluation is a graduation requirement for all psychology majors. The PCE is that Exit Evaluation.
2. When will I have to take it?
 - You have to take the PCE toward the end of the semester for which you have applied to graduate.
 - And, you will receive an email from Dr. Brito instructing you to take the exam – however, you will not be notified until after the deadline to apply for graduation has passed.
3. Where do I take it?
 - You take it online, on Desire2Learn (D2L). The PCE will show up as a NO SEMESTER “course” on your D2L class list.
4. How long will it take?
 - The PCE usually takes less than 1 hour to complete.
5. What information does the PCE cover?
 - The PCE consists of about 60 multiple-choice items reflecting core areas in psychology: Developmental, Social, Abnormal, Personality, Stats/Research Methods, Cognitive/Learning, and Biological. It also has two critical thinking short-answer questions.
 - It may have been a while since you've taken a class in a particular area or you may not have taken classes at all in that area. The exam is designed to assess core concepts in psychology that we feel are important for our graduates to know; so, we don't just want to test you on the classes you've taken, we want to assess your general knowledge about psychological constructs.
6. Why is it a graduation requirement?
 - Your performance allows the department to get a better understanding of how well we are doing. It may help us identify and improve weak areas in our curriculum. The purpose of the test is to evaluate our program, not individual students.
7. How will the information be used?
 - Scores on the PCE will be averaged across various student groups, and used in a number of Departmental Reports. The results will also be discussed by various Department faculty members as we consider what our students are learning about psychology and the courses we offer.
8. Will my score on the PCE affect my graduation?
 - No. Your performance on the PCE will be absolutely confidential and will in no way affect your graduation. Only the assessment committee chair will ever have access to individual student scores.
9. Can I find out my score?
 - Yes, through D2L you will be able to immediately see your score on the multiple-choice items. You will also be able to find out how you performed relative to other students.
 - Contact Dr. Stowell (jrstowell@eiu.edu) if you have questions about your score.
10. Are there any benefits for me?
 - Individual letters will be sent to students scoring in the top 10% of PCE takers each semester. These letters may be included in resumes, portfolios, achievement notes, etc.
11. I'm graduating this semester, and it is past the deadline to apply to graduate, but I haven't received any notification or email about taking the exam; it's not showing up on D2L. What do I do?
 - First, check PAWS and/or your degree audit to verify that you have applied to graduate on time for this semester. If that is in order, contact Dr. Brito (cfbrito@eiu.edu).
 - Note that you will only be notified about the PCE the semester in which you are actually graduating. If you are walking, but not graduating, the PCE will not be made available to you the semester you walk.
12. Who do I contact for more information?
 - You can contact Dr. Brito (cfbrito@eiu.edu) for general questions or Dr. Stowell (jrstowell@eiu.edu) for technical/D2L questions.