

from Quality Benchmarks in Undergraduate Psychology Programs

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(from pages 653-654) We use the term *distinguished* to refer to the characteristics of a psychology program that makes exceptional contributions to how well students learn about the science of psychology. We designate the next level of program function as *effective*, which represents making an adequate, appropriate, and positive contribution to student learning. A *developing* benchmark falls below a distinguished or an effective benchmark but still constitutes a marginal contribution. In contrast, characteristics that are *underdeveloped* are counterproductive to a program's educational mission. In some cases, the presence of underdeveloped areas can indicate a lack of well-defined goals within a program; in others, low-rated benchmarks reflect leadership and personnel problems, avoidance or neglect of responsibilities, lack of faculty and student engagement, severe resource constraints, or even collegial ambivalence or intradepartmental conflict.

The labels *developing* and *underdeveloped* are not meant to be pejorative, nor are they used to condemn the educational efforts within a program. These particular evaluative descriptions can highlight problems and redirect a program's efforts toward renewal and revitalization of purpose and pedagogy or point to the need for a critical reassessment of a program's educational goals. The labels should not be used to downgrade faculty efforts, to place a program on probation, or to reduce the amount of administrative support a psychology program receives (i.e., summative assessment). Instead, the labels are appropriate for formative assessment, a multidimensional method for evaluating a department's progress toward mastery of the quality benchmarks.... Thus, we view *developing* and *underdeveloped* as constructive, not constricting, labels that facilitate more successful program evolution.

(from page 662, Faculty characteristics) **Scholarship orientation.** Most tenure and promotion guidelines prominently feature an explicit expectation about the nature of scholarship. At a minimum, faculty need to maintain scholarly activity, and they may be required to publish a target number of publications in specific venues to qualify for advancement. In struggling programs, faculty may be disengaged from scholarship. Distinguished programs energize their faculty to develop and maintain research agendas that are consistent with local expectations and resources.

(from page 665, Administrative support) **Scholarship support.** A program's orientation toward and support for scholarship are two crucial issues that affect faculty scholarly activities. Successful programs encourage and facilitate active scholarship by providing faculty with time, facilities, and financial support to pursue research goals. Situations in which faculty scholarship is expected but not supported by the program can be especially problematic for faculty. Most programs have written guidelines for scholarship expectations, but faculty also receive social messages about the value of scholarship when they see whether and how colleagues are rewarded for research efforts. Both written guidelines (i.e., evaluation criteria) and unwritten social cues provide an indication of how scholarship is viewed in a program.

Distinguished programs also recognize and support the dynamic nature of faculty scholarly activities and understand that individual faculty members may have different goals for their scholarship at different stages of their careers. In a well-functioning and supportive environment, the diversity of scholarly activities is recognized (e.g., see Halpern et al., 1998; O'Meara, 2005; see also Halpern & Reich, 1999; Myers & Waller, 1999), and all faculty are not pressured to have their scholarly activities fit one model.

	UNDERDEVELOPED	DEVELOPING	EFFECTIVE	DISTINGUISHED
Faculty characteristics: Scholarship orientation	Produces no scholarship	Produces limited scholarship; may be driven by external demands	Engages actively in scholarship with adequate support	Pursues developmentally appropriate research agenda
Administrative support: Scholarship support	Discourages scholarly activity through insufficient support	Expects scholarly activity but may not provide appropriate support	Provides adequate support for scholarly activity	Promotes and enables vital engagement with an array of scholarship and opportunities