



Creative environment assessment form

**Applicant:**

Department of Psychology Faculty of Arts, University of Trnava

Unit of assessment:

Social Sciences – 19. Psychology

Context, mission and scientific profiling:

The primary task of the Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Arts, Trnava University, is to provide higher education in the field of psychology at all three levels of university study, as well as to promote the development of psychology as a science through research activities. In addition to these core activities, the Department of Psychology also participates in the practical application of psychological knowledge, particularly through psychological counseling at the Student Support Centre of Trnava University (Psychological Clinic) and the support of students with specific needs at the Faculty of Arts. The department also contributes to enhancing the professional preparation of psychologists in practice, as well as specialists in related disciplines, through training courses and seminars. These activities are carried out in collaboration with external institutions (e.g., the non-governmental organization “Help for Victims of Violence”).

Research activities at the department are conducted through both grant and non-grant projects, which reflect the current demands and challenges in psychological theory and practice. Evidence of the international quality of the basic and applied research in various areas of psychology is demonstrated by the increasing number of foreign citations in scientific journals indexed in databases such as Web of Science and Scopus.

The department is equipped with a research laboratory, furnished with comprehensive instrumentation, allowing the execution of high-quality research in psychology at an international level. The equipment enables the measurement of brain electrical activity and physiological body responses (heart rate, HRV, skin conductance response, et.). Infrared eye-tracking cameras allow for precise and high temporal resolution mapping of spatial attention, revealing both conscious and automated responses of participants.

Notable research topics addressed at the department between 2020 and 2024 include: the adaptation of The Big Five Inventory–2 (BFI-2) and its socio-demographic and psychological correlates in the Slovak context; item response theory; thinking and problem-solving processes; functional asymmetry of brain hemispheres in relation to cognitive abilities; psychological aspects of bullying in schools; selected risk factors in cyberspace (internet gaming disorder, cyberbullying); cognitive-existential profiles and post-traumatic growth in recovered oncology patients; and an existential perspective on adolescence. Key research themes also include the psychology of loss and grief, experiences and behavior during emerging adulthood, and the cognitive impacts of sports-related brain injuries in adolescents.

Strategy:

Publications in scientific journals indexed in databases such as Web of Science and Scopus, as well as monographs and university textbooks, have an impact not only on the scientific and research sphere (evidenced by the continually increasing citations), but also on the professional community (psychologists and related professions in various professional settings who apply this knowledge in their daily practice).

As part of increasing societal impact during the evaluated period, our department, in addition to scientific publications, conducted lectures for the professional public (psychologists, educators, etc.), where the results of various research projects were presented. Additionally, lectures were also held for the general public.

In 2024, a project proposal was submitted for the VEGA grant titled *Risky Behaviors of Adolescents in Cyberspace and Their Negative Consequences on Mental Health in the Post-Pandemic Period*, which, according to evaluation results, will be successful and implemented from 2025 to 2028. The project focuses on analyzing two constructs related to risky behaviors in digital space: internet gaming disorder and cyberbullying. The secondary objective is to explore their risk/protective factors on the levels of social, personality, and mental health, with an emphasis on hitherto underexplored existential factors. The use of a combination of a comprehensive battery of questionnaires, through longitudinal research, will help clarify the mechanisms of occurrence and better understand the impacts of online risky behaviors. The experimental design, focusing on cognitive variables and craving, will allow for the objective diagnosis of internet gaming disorder. This multidimensional model of research has explicit practical implications, as it can contribute to the development of methodological guidelines, preventive programs for adolescents, and resources for schools to mitigate risky behavior in cyberspace.

In 2025, we plan to submit two grant projects, both focusing on response styles that distort answers. One of them focuses on acquiescence bias (the tendency to agree rather than disagree, regardless of the content of the items), and the other on socially desirable responding (the tendency to answer insincerely in an attempt to enhance one's image). The aim of these projects is to examine the characteristics, predictors, manifestations, and impacts of these response styles, as well as how they can be controlled. The last two aspects are particularly relevant for practice—response styles distort results not only in research but can also be problematic in psychodiagnostics. For this reason, we consider it valuable to explore how much of an impact they may have on test results (e.g., on the average score) and how they can be controlled (e.g., by ensuring a highly anonymous response environment or by including reverse-coded items in the instruments).

The project will focus on five key areas of response styles: a) exploring their characteristics, b) predictors, c) manifestations, d) impacts, and e) control mechanisms. Planned studies will involve manipulating response scales—adjusting their orientation and altering the wording of individual items. We aim to verify whether acquiescence bias can still be identified with both implicit and reversed scales, and if it reflects the same response style as with traditional response scales (explicit agreement with orientation from disagreement to agreement). In further research, we plan to experiment with respondent fatigue and investigate its effect on distorting answers in the direction of acquiescence bias. Regarding social desirability, one planned study will focus on monitoring eye movements (eyetracking)—as eye movements may serve as an indicator of response distortion (and self-enhancement) in self-report methods. To verify the impacts and control mechanisms, we will create reverse equivalents for instruments that do not contain reverse-coded items, and check whether the nature of the variable changes significantly. If it does, one possibility is that the effect of acquiescence bias was not controlled without the use of reverse-coded items.

Collaboration and contribution to the research field, economy and society:

The main partner of the department is the external educational institution, the Institute of Experimental Psychology at the Centre for Social and Psychological Research (CSPV), Slovak Academy of Sciences (SAS), with which the university has an agreement for the joint implementation of doctoral studies. Other partners include collaborating research institutions such as the Faculty of Psychology at Paneuropean University, Prešov University in Prešov, the Research Institute of Child Psychology and Psychopathology, and the Department of Psychology at Palacký University in Olomouc, among others. These institutions carry out joint research projects with Trnava University, in which doctoral students also participate with their own research contributions. The collaboration with organizations such as the Help for Victims of Violence, the Slovak Institute of Logotherapy, the Slovak Reproducibility Network, and the Institute for Integrative Psychotherapy and Psychological Counseling in Olomouc is also of significant importance.

Employees:

The Department of Psychology at the Faculty of Arts, Trnava University, currently employs 13 full-time academic staff members and several part-time staff members. The department also provides professional training for doctoral students, equipping them with the necessary skills to acquire the latest knowledge in the field, expand their knowledge base through independent scientific research, and apply it in psychological practice. During their training, students gain the ability to analyze psychological phenomena with a high level of abstract thinking, combined with the ability to move from the empirical side of psychological reality to its essence, i.e., to uncover the psychological mechanisms behind the phenomena under investigation.

Doctoral students have access to courses focused on research methodology, statistics, and scientific writing. Their research activities are financially supported through research grants, allowing them to carry out their projects and utilize grant resources. At the same time, their publication activities are intensively supported and supervised—doctoral students receive expert assistance in preparing articles for indexed scientific journals and in participating in conferences. As part of their curriculum, students are required to publish at least one article in a journal indexed in the Web of Science or Scopus databases. The curriculum also emphasizes the principles of open science. We encourage students to use transparent and reproducible methods, make data publicly accessible, and share results with the broader academic community.

Doctoral students are guided towards an interdisciplinary approach and are motivated to establish collaborations both nationally and internationally. Individual mentoring by supervisors includes consultations on research, methodology, and ethical aspects. Doctoral students also actively participate in teaching activities at the department, thus developing their pedagogical skills.

Doctoral studies:

Jendrol, Filip: The Role of Inner Speech in Solving Insight Problems. Trnava, Trnava University, 2024.
<https://opac.crzp.sk/?fn=detailBiblioForm&sid=1EA8DF3C7C88A4423BA72A5245AB>

Filipovič, Vladimír: Selected Psychosocial Factors in the Context of Internet Gaming Disorder in Adolescents. Trnava, Trnava University, 2024.
<https://opac.crzp.sk/?fn=detailBiblioForm&sid=46E5F073F744ACC4FB7A4B767BF7>

Havan, Patrik: Identification, Properties, and Mechanisms of Acquiescence Bias. Trnava, Trnava University, 2022. <https://opac.crzp.sk/?fn=detailBiblioForm&sid=B747597CEB0F256B8164E6FCAE61>

Lendvayová, Simona: Cognitive Specificities of Autism Spectrum Disorders in Adulthood. Trnava, Trnava University, 2020.
<https://opac.crzp.sk/?fn=detailBiblioForm&sid=669792990D135F3F5CBBA60DC5E0>

Kohútová, Veronika: Protective Factors of Well-being During the Fulfillment of Developmental Tasks in Adolescence and Emerging Adulthood. Trnava, Trnava University, 2021.
<https://opac.crzp.sk/?fn=detailBiblioForm&sid=A46C5EDFB3C484950455A73FAE6C>

Income, infrastructure and facilities:

1. Describe the material and technical facilities available to the institution to support research or artistic activities and to enable or contribute to its societal impact.

The Department of Psychology is equipped with a comprehensive library of standardized psychodiagnostic instruments in Slovak, Czech, and English. These tools are systematically utilized in educational and research activities across all three levels of study in the field of psychology (bachelor's, master's, and doctoral level). The availability of a wide range of validated tests supports both the development of students' diagnostic competencies and the implementation of empirical research projects in various areas of psychological science.

The department holds institutional licenses for the computerized diagnostic and neurorehabilitation software systems NEUROP-2 and NEUROP-3. These platforms are employed not only in the diagnostic evaluation of cognitive processes within research projects, but also as didactic tools for illustrating the assessment of cognitive functions and principles of neuropsychological rehabilitation within practical training modules and seminars.

The department is equipped with a research laboratory, furnished with comprehensive instrumentation, allowing the execution of high-quality research in psychology at an international level. The equipment enables the measurement of brain electrical activity and physiological body responses (heart rate, HRV, skin conductance response, et.). Infrared eye-tracking cameras allow for precise and high temporal resolution mapping of spatial attention, revealing both conscious and automated responses of participants.

For purposes of statistical data processing and analysis, the department utilizes a dedicated multimedia laboratory equipped with 16 networked computers, each licensed with the full version of the SPSS statistical package. Furthermore, the department provides access to the SPSS AMOS module, which facilitates structural equation modeling (SEM), widely used in advanced psychometric and behavioral data analysis. To enhance accessibility and methodological flexibility, all workstations are also equipped with Jamovi, a free, open-source statistical software suitable for both teaching and research.

The department's hardware and software infrastructure is systematically integrated into both educational curricula and research activities, ensuring the development of students' methodological competence and supporting the implementation of evidence-based scientific inquiry in accordance with international standards of psychological research and education.

Word limit: max. 400 words

2. Indicate the amount of funding received for science and research from the state budget allocation during the assessed period 1.1.2020 - 31.12.2024. (EUR)
- to be filled out by the respective department of the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic
3. Please indicate the amount of funds received for science and research in a competitive way (grants) during the evaluated period 1.1.2020 - 31.12.2024 from the state budget or from the European Union sources. (EUR) - *to be filled out by the respective department of the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic*
4. Indicate the amount of funding received during the assessed period 1.1.2020 - 31.12.2024 from other than state and public sources. (EUR) - *to be filled out by the respective department of the Ministry of Education, Research, Development and Youth of the Slovak Republic*

