

Anthropology - Master of Arts - Mid-Cycle Review & SLOA Year

Current Compliance Year: 2022-2023

Mid-Cycle review

Recent Recommendations

Feedback will include recommendations from the last Expedited Review or from your most recent review by your school or college. You may not see any feedback or recommendations until you have completed your first full or mid-cycle review.

Response to Previous Recommendations (if any):

Actions taken to address Anthropology MA Program Recommendation 1 (Increase retention/persistence):

Covid-19 has disproportionately affected graduate students who were at the early stages of their research. Anthropological fieldwork typically involves extensive human interaction and participation in daily activities, conducted during a stay in a community and/or with a local family; archaeological fieldwork requires group efforts during excavations and consultations with culture bearers. Many of our MA students were therefore unable to conduct the fieldwork they had envisioned for their graduate studies. To mitigate this impact of Covid-19 while working to increase retention/persistence,

Anthropology Faculty have been:

- Taking part in the national and international discussions (conferences, workshops, NSF and NIH Covid Information Commons Webinars) that focus on new approaches in anthropological research;
- Successfully pursuing funding opportunities to support students disproportionately affected by the pandemic;
- Working individually with every student to help develop an MA Thesis project that can be safely and feasibly completed under the conditions of the pandemic.

Actions taken to address Anthropology MA Program Recommendation 2 (Improve time to degree):

- We made changes to the Language and Research Tool degree requirements: students are now able to choose between Language or Research Tool; Anthropology MA Graduate Student Manual has been updated;
- We are collecting nationwide data on Anthropology MA programs and consulting with our professionally employed MA alumni to develop a longer-term plan for possibly revisioning our MA program, to make sure it is optimally efficient while meeting the current workforce needs in the field.

Student Learning Outcomes

The previous Student Learning Outcomes Assessment has been submitted as its own report. Going forward you will use the following prompts to discuss the success of your most recent SLOA plan and address your assessment activities since your last SLOA report (typically the past two years or since your last program review).

Learning outcomes feedback from last review:

Feedback will be provided once you have completed a full or mid-cycle review.

Discuss your SLOA findings, changes you are making and what you hope to see as a result:

Anthropology held two successful MA Thesis defenses over the reporting period (as discussed in the section Response to Previous Recommendations, Covid-19 has severely impacted fieldwork opportunities for our MA students, and we have taken measures to mitigate this impact). Our SLOA data collection for MA Thesis defenses asks each faculty member to identify any subject areas or relevant bodies of scholarship that should have been included and/or received more robust coverage during the defense and evaluate the student's demonstrated knowledge of (1) the relevant historical and/or cultural background for the topic, (2) relevant methodologies, (3) relevant theoretical frameworks. For the reporting period, the SLOA evaluation under these criteria were predominantly Excellent/High Pass, with comments reasserting that the student has demonstrated at the highest level the ability to collect a robust corpus of data, carry out data analysis on par with the state-of-the-field expectations, and present findings in the relevant theoretical, regional, historical context; fewer responses were Good/Pass, with comments stating the student could have done better at demonstrating awareness of comparative regional case studies on their subject and be more provocative at proposing possible future directions in their area of expertise. Anthropology Faculty hold bi-weekly meetings where student needs, degree progress, and accomplishments (conference participation, publications, participation in public outreach activities) are always part of the discussion.

Discuss the curricular changes made based on assessing your SLO. If you haven't made any curricular changes, please explain why not and address what you did notice in the review, including strengths of your curriculum through the assessment of your outcomes:

Alongside the changes in Language and Research Tool requirements, we are currently developing a plan for a longer-term assessment of our MA program. The plan, spanning the current year and AY 2023-24, includes examining professional anthropological organizations' data on four-field MA degrees (i.e. programs that simultaneously train student in Cultural, Biological, Linguistic, and Archaeology subfields of anthropology at MA level) vs. subfield-based MA degrees, collecting employer data, and holding discussion panels with professionally employed UAF MA Anthropology alumni – all leading up to a faculty retreat, tentatively to be held in Spring 2024, with the goals of synthesizing the results of our inquiry and decide whether and which changes should be made to our MA Program, and, if necessary, move forward with the approval processes for the implementation of those changes. Anthropology faculty are actively involved in professional organizations relevant to their subfield and thematic expertise (Alaska Anthropological Association, Society for Linguistic Anthropology, American Association of Biological Anthropologists, Society for American Archaeology, International Arctic Social Sciences Association, Society for Applied Anthropology, among others); we make our best efforts to remain up to date on the expectations for MA graduates applying to PhD programs and qualifications desired by employers. All our recent MA graduates are either professionally employed or are attending PhD programs. Students in our current MA cohort are being recruited by State, Federal, and Tribal entities to work as cultural resource managers, field ethnographers, public educators, and community liaisons, and to carry leading roles in anthropological and multidisciplinary projects.

Are communication outcomes embedded in the SLOA Plan?

As of 2017 all Baccalaureate programs were required to embed the communication outcomes within their SLOA Plans, this is optional for non-Baccalaureate programs.

Not Embedded

Student Success

To access the Student Success Dashboard please sign into a UA computer with VPN connection (if not on campus). You will need your UA credentials and it is best accessed with the most updated version of Chrome, Edge, Firefox or Safari browsers; Internet Explorer is not supported. You will need to filter the data to see your programs. If you need assistance in finding the data for your programs, please contact your data liaison or [Julia Manfredini](#) in the PAIR office.

Data Liaisons

Each school or college has a team of Data Liaisons to help you analyze the data provided in the portal and may be able to help you see your data in multiple contexts. You can find a list of data liaisons on the resources page for Program Review.

The college or school level committee will also have access to this data with the goal that by providing these visualizations data availability will be increased.

Data supplied within the dashboard linked below is intended for Academic Program Review and not for any other purpose.

Student Success Data Dashboard

Previous Feedback

Feedback will be provided once you have completed a full or mid-cycle review.

Student Success Data Trends:

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If equity gaps were found in any of your disaggregated student success data, please explain how you plan to address those gaps. Please contact your data liaison or make an appointment with [Julia Manfredini](#) to learn more about analyzing your data.

PAIR data shows our MA program does not suffer from equity gaps. The [redacted] to [redacted] ratio consistently averages around 60%-40%, with several students identifying as [redacted]. [redacted] represented in our MA cohort has doubled from 4 to 8 during the reporting period (out of the total 22 accounted for in PAIR data). [redacted] representation has increased from 1 to 4, and Race representation has also diversified to include students identifying as [redacted], [redacted], and [redacted]. Several of our MA students, including those representing [redacted] conduct grant-funded research. [redacted] groups are well represented in our MA cohort. Supporting students who are expectant parents and/or welcome new babies during their graduate studies is our high priority. We make sure that nursing mothers among our graduate students have a comfortable nursing space within steps from their offices. Faculty serving on graduate advisory committees always discuss options for the GSP and thesis projects that are compatible with the challenges described by student-parents. Anthropology faculty have successfully competed for NSF funding to support graduate students who are disproportionately (as identified by the Biden Administration and NSF) affected by the Covid-19 pandemic, to offer graduate assistantships and professional development opportunities such as workshop/conference participation. This year two of our MA students who are [redacted] traveled to present their NSF-funded research at the International Congress of Ethnobiology, and several of our MA students continue to collaborate with the Alaska Department of Fish and Game to conduct research in rural Alaska.

Optional Data Explanation

Feel free to share more of your thoughts on the data provided.

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High Impact Practices

According to the AAC&U, High-Impact Educational Practices “have been widely tested and have been shown to be beneficial to college students from many backgrounds.” UAF is particularly interested in Undergraduate Research and/or Scholarly Activity because it is one of our mission fulfillment indicators, but all of these researched High-Impact Educational Practices should be reflected in your program’s student learning outcomes and curriculum.

Previous Feedback

Feedback will be provided once you have completed a full or mid-cycle review.

High-Impact Practices Used in this Program

Please use the following fields to discuss how your program is using the high-impact practices, successes and known issues and solutions, or ways you are considering incorporating them in the future. If you are not using any of the high-impact practices listed, please use the “Other or None of These,” field to share what your program is doing to help students be successful.

High Impact Practices that currently apply to your program:

Diversity/Global Learning, First-Year Seminars and Experiences, Collaborative Assignments and Projects
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Other or None of these (explain)

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Submission

Submitter & Collaborator Names

Sveta Yamin-Pasternak, Elaine Drew, Patrick Plattet, and Robin Shoaps prepared the report. All Anthropology faculty were able to review and contribute to the report distributed via a shared document prior to submission.

Submitter Email

syamin@alaska.edu, emdrew@alaska.edu, pplattet@alaska.edu, rashoaps@alaska.edu
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College or School Review Committee

The college or school committees set the tone for helping each program feel seen during this process. We have provided you with strength-based feedback tags to attach to this program review. Please select as many as applicable.

Overall Recommendations

Increase retention/persistence, Improve time to degree

Explanation of Recommendations

Work with Graduate School to improve retention and time to degree for graduate degrees.

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Feedback (tags)

Compelling learning story

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Feedback (narrative)

Three comprehensive exams used to assess student's skill and knowledge following the end of the 2nd year of study and prior to beginning the thesis project. The program does utilize a number of rubrics, and course evaluation criteria, and the mastery of the topic is determined by an advisory committee. The program discusses well how the SLOA is utilized to revise curriculum and programming. They are currently in the process of developing a longer term assessment of their MA program.

Profile Feedback

Financial Feedback

Student Success & Equity Feedback

The program is seeing an increase in all forms of diversity in their students. They note that the program is very supportive of those students that are expecting or new parents, working closely with and providing a comfortable environment as a key to supporting their success. Though there is an increase in majors, there continues to be a low number of degrees awarded, even with a high percentage of graduation-informed persistence.

High-Impact Practices Feedback

The program emphasizes the integration of Diversity and Global Learning in a multitude of courses, along with utilizing collaborative assignments and projects. This is a good example of using HIPS in the graduate programs.

M.A. in Anthropology
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan
August 2020

Mission Statement: The UAF Department of Anthropology is committed to scholarship and research in anthropology with a general geographic focus on the circumpolar regions of the north as well as research and instruction covering a variety of world areas and topical subjects. The teaching and research activities in the department cover the four subfields of the discipline: archaeology, biological anthropology, linguistic and social/cultural anthropology. The graduate program offers students the opportunity to concentrate study in one of the four subfields, to gain research experience and methodological training in the field and in the laboratory, and emphasizes empirical and applied studies.

Goal Statement: To assure that graduates are prepared to mobilize their training and knowledge of anthropology either to compete successfully in the job market in their chosen subfield or related areas or to compete successfully for admission to institutions of higher learning to pursue further graduate or professional education.

Intended Objectives/Outcomes	Assessment Criteria and Procedures	Implementation
Students will be able to demonstrate expertise in their chosen subfield of anthropology.	Of the 21 credits of 600-level coursework required for the MA degree, three of these must be a core class in their subfield.	The student's committee will review and report on the student's academic performance and progress toward program completion in the Annual Report of Advisory Committee.
	Comprehensive exams, administered at the end of the fall semester of a student's second year of study, evaluate knowledge of the relevant historical and/or cultural background for the topics, knowledge of relevant methodologies, and knowledge of relevant theoretical frameworks.	After the completion of the exam, the advisory committee will evaluate the student's performance following a rubric (see MA Comprehensive Exam Assessment Score Sheet).

	Master's theses demonstrate students' mastery of a specific topic of inquiry within their subfield.	The student's advisory committee and department faculty in attendance will complete the Program Learning Assessment Score Sheet - Thesis and Dissertation Defense and submit to the Graduate Program Coordinator for outcomes assessment. The student's advisory committee will not allow the student to schedule a defense until the committee is satisfied that the student's thesis demonstrates mastery of their topic.
Students will be fluent in the research methodologies associated with their subfield and will be able to apply them to their own research.	Students will be required to take one methods-focused class related to their subfield.	The student's advisory committee will review the student's performance in the methods course based on the grade assigned by the instructor of record and discussion with the student during the annual committee meeting. The advisory committee will evaluate the student's knowledge of relevant methodologies as applied in the thesis using a rubric (see Thesis SLOA rubric).
Students will have a general knowledge of the four fields of anthropology.	Students are required to take Anth 629 (3cr) covering research orientations, evidence and argumentation across the four subfields.	The instructor of record will assess the student's general cross-subfield knowledge according to the course evaluation criteria.
Students will be flexible thinkers and able to make connections between their subfield and at least one other subfield.	Students will be required to take at least one class outside of their subfield. Master's theses will engage with or be informed by literature, methodology or theoretical insights from at least one of the other subfields.	Their grade reflects their performance in the class. In addition, the advisory committee will evaluate the student's ability to integrate knowledge from beyond their subfield in the MA comprehensive exam rubric (see Graduate Program Learning Assessment Score Sheet MA Comprehensive Exam)

Students will be able to develop original research and present it in a variety of public and scholarly settings.	Students receive training in participating in professional societies (writing and submitting abstracts and giving a professional presentation) in ANTH 652 Research Design and Professional Development, one of the required courses for the MA. Master's theses and seminar papers provide opportunities for students to develop original research. The thesis defense gives students the opportunity to present their original research to the public.	The instructor of record grades students' research abstracts and presentations. The thesis defense rubric evaluates theses for their originality and rigor. After the defense, the advisory committee will evaluate the defense based on the student's oral presentation and argumentation skills.
Students will be prepared to enter professional careers or apply to continue their graduate or professional training.	Writing a thesis and completing ANTH 652 (Research Design and Professional Development) prepares students to engage in tasks associated with entering the job market or applying to advanced graduate or professional training (research proposals, cover letters, CV and resume, job interviews, research dissemination, etc.)	The instructor of record evaluates these assignments as part of the student's grade in the course. The department will collect information on whether students were admitted to PhD programs or got jobs in anthropology or related fields.