

Fisheries - Doctor of Philosophy

Current Compliance Year: 2023-2024

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):

N/A

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:

Seven PhD students graduated during the review period, while one student withdrew from the program. All but one student passed their comprehensive exam within 3 years, exceeding our 80% goal for this metric and demonstrating technical knowledge (SLO #2). Students also demonstrated ‘strong’ or ‘competent’ knowledge of the literature, meeting all goals with respect to SLO # 2. With regard to written and oral communications (SLO #1), the goal of 80% of students displaying ‘competent’ or ‘strong’ writing skills was met, but Chair evaluations suggested some weaknesses in the clarity of communication in 2 out of 7 dissertations. Students were rated as competent or better in problem solving skills (analytical, logical, SLO #3) based on the defense and written dissertation (with one student “needing improvement” in quantitative skills), hence meeting program goals. Graduates were either “satisfied” (2) or “very satisfied” (5) with their career preparedness, meeting program goals. Moreover, all PhD students graduating in 2017-2020 were employed in their field within one year (3-year post-graduation survey). While most students publish 1-3 papers within one year of graduation (average: 1.6), our goal of 75% submitting a manuscript within a year was not met (5 of 7 or 71%), but well over 75% successfully publish within 3 years with an average of 2.4 papers per student. Overall, the PhD program continues to graduate competent and strong professionals that are satisfied with the education they received, are successful in finding employment and mostly publish their work.
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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:

There have been a number of curricular changes due to faculty retirements, with the potential to affect PhD students. Several courses are no longer offered or were not offered for several years (including, among others, FISH 605: Communicating Science to the Public, FISH 640: Management of Renewable Marine Resources, FISH 643: Fisheries Oceanography). We hope to offer these courses again in the
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future, pending new faculty hires. Some of the more popular courses, such as Ecosystem-Based Fisheries Management (FISH 641) and Fisheries Oceanography have been taken on by current faculty. Additional course offerings have also been added in support of the Tamamta program, thereby broadening our curriculum in the area of Human Dimensions, an area of growing demand due to the need for social scientists to work on fishery issues at the State and Federal levels.

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.

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: (please indicate the trends that apply to your program)

No change in majors, No change in degrees awarded, No change in SCH, No change in persistence, Decrease in pass rates

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.

Potential equity gaps may be present and we will continue to monitor graduation rates. The fisheries program has historically not been very diverse but has recently diversified its composition with increases in the number of minority students (██████████ and ██████████ students combined), in the PhD program doubling from a total of 4 in 2019 to 8 in 2023, with a corresponding increase in the SCHs taken by these students. These trends are not yet evident in the number of degrees conferred. While on average over the recent 5-year period, 76% of enrolled students who reported their race were ██████████ 95% of students earning degrees during this period were ██████████ (18 of 19 reporting). This may be a result of historically low numbers of minority students (prior to the recent 5-year period) and we will monitor these trends

closely to assess graduation rates by group as more recent and more diverse cohorts begin to earn their degrees. There is no evidence of inequities in pass rates among groups over the last 5 years.

Optional Data Explanation

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

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, Undergraduate Research, Writing-Intensive Courses

Collaborative Assignments & Projects

Undergraduate Research

Many Ph D graduate students are supported by undergraduate students in the field and lab, providing excellent mentoring opportunities for graduate students (and learning opportunities for undergraduates). Mentoring is currently not assessed in our SLOA plan, but we have started discussions about how this can be done effectively.

Diversity/Global Learning

The Tamamta Program in Fisheries is a graduate program designed to uplift indigenous voices in fisheries and has provided opportunities for all of our students to engage with Tamamta fellows and faculty in dialogues about racial equity and indigenizing fisheries in Alaska. Instructors have incorporated indigenous perspectives in some of our regular Fisheries courses (e.g. Ecosystem-based Fisheries Management) and continue to do so. New classes specifically addressing indigenous fisheries issues have also been added to the program (FISH 616: Indigenous Fisheries of Alaska).

ePortfolios

First-Year Seminars & Experiences

Writing-Intensive Courses

The program includes many writing-intensive courses such as Fisheries Management (FISH 687) or Human Dimensions of Environmental Systems (FISH 611) and even quantitative courses such as Modern Applied Statistics for Fisheries, which includes writing a project paper in manuscript format. Writing skills are tracked via instructor and committee assessments in our SLOAs as summarized above.

Service-Learning and/or Community-based Learning

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Internships

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Capstone Courses & Projects

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Other or None of these (explain)

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Submission

Submitter & Collaborator Names

Franz Mueter Andrew Seitz Christina Sutton Gabrielle Hazelton
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Submitter Email

fmueter@alaska.edu

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

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Explanation of Recommendations

Many of the comments for the Fisheries PhD and Fisheries MS are the same because, outside of the student success data, the program reviews were identical. SLOA plans are very similar or identical for the programs in Fisheries. It is essential that different programs have different outcomes - if students are intended to learn the same things, how are the programs differentiated? Something to resolve, per some of the guidance below, for the full-cycle review in two years.

The review panel acknowledges the time and effort that went into preparing the mid-cycle program review for the Fisheries PhD program. The review panel appreciates that the program has made curricular changes to address student needs in support of the Tamamta program, which is an important initiative at UAF. The review panel also appreciates that the program provided a thorough overview of the data trends (student success data) and narrative for the HIPs (high-impact practices). The review panel would also like to emphasize the need for the full program review in two years and how it has addressed any declines in student success metrics.

Learning Outcomes Feedback

Requires Minor Revision

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Feedback (tags)

Strong alignment with SLOA plan,"Clear, concise presentation of findings"

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Feedback (narrative)

The program provided 4 SLOs for the Fisheries PhD SLOA plan. The review panel offers the following recommendations to improve upon the program's SLOAs:

- SLO #s1-3 were appropriate as measures of student learning.
- SLO # 4 is program outcomes and not tied to student learning.
- The recommendation from the review panel is to reduce the number of SLOs from 4 to 3 by eliminating SLO #4. The program is encouraged to retain this measure of outcome assessment (#4) for their own internal tracking purposes (just not use it as part of program review). Post-graduation activities, such as job placement, are not considered an assessment of student learning and are instead program outcomes. Per guidance from the NWCCU for accreditation purposes, they recommend that degree programs have between 3-5 SLOs per program (so the 3 remaining SLOs would meet that requirement).

- A 4th or 5th SLO could be added that directly assesses student learning from the degree program. The program might consider revising the outcomes to include more "action" words. It is difficult to assess things like "understand" or "recognize." "Identify", "explain", or "analyze" are clearer outcomes to assess. <https://tips.uark.edu/blooms-taxonomy-verb-chart/>.

The program provided an assessment plan for collecting data as well as a process to evaluate the SLOs. The data/artifacts were provided but no rubrics were included (should do so for future program reviews).

The program noted curricular changes which included additional course offerings in support of the Tamamta program, thereby broadening the curriculum in the area of Human Dimensions. These

changes have received positive feedback from the students, particularly those in the Tamamta program, and allow them to focus more on classes they see as advantageous for their future careers. Following NWCCU guidance, SLOA plans must emphasize "closing the loop" and continuous improvement, ensuring each SLO within the plan is assessed individually to verify alignment with program objectives. If a SLO fails to produce the expected assessment outcome, adjustments to SLO language, substantial changes to the SLO, or revisions to data collection rubrics are necessary to ensure alignment and facilitate program improvement.

Student Success & Equity Feedback

The program noted no change in majors (declined from 33 to 29), degrees awarded (declined from 9 to 6), GIP (slight decline – 93.8 to 92.6%), and SCH (increase from 9.3 to 11.16) and a decline in pass rates (97 to 93%); also noted potential equity gaps (increase in ■■■■, although too early to examine trends via Tamamta program; will be worth following up on for the full program review in 2 years). Graduates are predominantly ■■■■ and ■■■■; how are other demographic groups supported in terms of degree completion? The review panel feels that it would be beneficial to see how the program intends to address any declines in student success metrics.

High-Impact Practices Feedback

The program identified writing-intensive courses, diversity/global learning, and UG research as (recast as UG research mentoring) HIPs; provided a narrative for each HIP, but not clear where these HIPs fit into the program or if all students are required to complete them. The review panel recommends including examples to demonstrate/highlight each HIP. For example, what are examples of capstone course projects? What percentage of students participate in each HIP for those that are optional? The review panel recognizes that the HIPs employed by the Fisheries program are all positive and meaningful in preparing students to enter the workforce.

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan
Ph.D. Fisheries Science
 College of Fisheries and Ocean Sciences
 2021

Expanded Statement of Institutional Purpose	Intended Objectives/Outcomes	Assessment Criteria and Procedures	Implementation (what, when, who)
MISSION STATEMENT: We shall provide quality graduate education responsive to the needs of individual students and the diverse population of Alaska. GOAL STATEMENT: To ensure that our graduates are adequately prepared to succeed in the job market in their chosen fisheries field or a closely related field.	1. Communication 1a. Written: Students should be able to develop a written dissertation that includes publishable scientific papers using clear language, logic, and convincing arguments. 1b. Oral: Students should be able to deliver a professional oral presentation and respond to questions with confidence.	<u>Instruments:</u> Written Ph.D. dissertation <u>Min. Standard:</u> 80% of graduating students will write at the level of a competent fisheries professional. <u>Instruments:</u> Public presentation of dissertation; Oral defense of dissertation. <u>Min. Standards:</u> 80% will present dissertation at the level of a competent fisheries professional. 80% will successfully defend dissertation.	Advisory Committee will rate students on scale of 1-4 in terms of writing ability at the dissertation defense. Department Head or designee will review dissertation using similar criteria. Advisory Committee will rate students on scale of 1-4 in terms of clarity of verbal presentation at dissertation defense. Advisory committee will grade dissertation defense as pass, conditional pass or fail. Academics Office will track success rates and scores.
	2. Technical Knowledge Students should display mastery of relevant knowledge of fishery science in a range of subject areas identified by the committee. Students should be experts in the subject area of their dissertation.	<u>Instruments:</u> Comprehensive Exam. <u>Min. Standard:</u> 80% of students will pass their Comprehensive Exam within 3 years of admission. <u>Instruments:</u> Written dissertation <u>Min. Standard:</u> 80% will demonstrate technical knowledge of dissertation subject at the level of a competent fisheries professional; 80% will demonstrate familiarity with relevant literature at the level of a competent fisheries professional.	Advisory Committee will grade comprehensive exam as pass, conditional pass, or fail. Advisory Committee will rate technical knowledge on scale of 1-4 at dissertation defense. Advisory Committee will rate familiarity with relevant literature on scale of 1-4 at dissertation defense. Academics Office will track success rates and scores.

Submitted by:

	3. Problem Solving 3a. Logical Thinking: Students should be able to recognize assumptions, evaluate arguments and draw conclusions. 3b. Analytical: Demonstrate mastery in data collection, analysis, interpretation and reporting.	<u>Instruments:</u>Comprehensive exam; written dissertation; oral defense. <u>Min. Standard:</u> 80% of students will pass their Comprehensive Exam within 3 years of admission. 80% will demonstrate ability to think logically at the level of a competent fisheries professional. <u>Instruments:</u> Written dissertation; public & oral defense <u>Min. Standards:</u> 80% will present their data and analyses at the level of a competent fisheries professional in writing and during public & oral defense.	Advisory Committee will grade Comprehensive Exam as pass, conditional pass, or fail, based in part on ability to logically think through arguments. Advisory Committee will rate 'logical thinking' on scale of 1-4 at dissertation defense. Advisory Committee will rate quantitative ability on scale of 1-4 at dissertation defense. Academics Office will track success rates and scores.
	4. Career preparedness: 4a. Academic: Be prepared to teach Fisheries Science courses in Universities and four year colleges, at the upper-division and graduate levels. 4b. Professional: Be prepared to compete successfully for senior professional career positions. 4c. Publishing: Demonstrate the ability to prepare and publish peer-reviewed manuscripts in professional journals	<u>Instruments:</u> Exit Interview; Follow-up surveys. <u>Min. Standards:</u> 80% of graduates will be "satisfied" with the educational and professional preparedness that they received in the Fisheries Program at UAF. 80% of graduates seeking employment in fisheries or aquatic sciences will succeed within one year of graduation. 75% of graduates will submit a manuscript based on their PhD research to a peer-reviewed scientific journal within 1 year of graduating. 75% of graduates will be first author on a peer-reviewed scientific article within 3 years of graduating.	Upon graduation, Department staff will give each graduate an exit interview assessing their satisfaction with the program. Three years after graduation, Department staff and the faculty advisor will request that each graduate complete a short alumni questionnaire, addressing their experiences seeking employment or continuing graduate studies. Three years after graduation, the advisor will be asked whether the students submitted manuscripts to peer-reviewed journals, and whether any were published. Similar questions will be asked of the student in the exit interview.