

Interdisciplinary Studies - Bachelor of Arts

Current Compliance Year: 2024-2025

Mid-Cycle review

*Formatting adjustments have been made to align with the standard submission requirements for committee 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.

Consider curricular revisions

Continue the process of defining and revising student learning outcomes and meeting the needs of the different student populations identified by the program: students in the goals option and students in the degree completion option. Consider establishing a General Studies B.A./B.S.

Clearly articulate the difference between the BAAS, the BA and the BS.

Response to Previous Recommendations (if any):

(250 Word Limit)

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:

Missing a direct measure, Missing curricular connection, Missing collaboration in department

The capstone course seems like a meaningful addition to meet the needs of the students. However it is not clear why degree completion students are only required to take the 0 credit course, while "goals" students are required to also complete a second component. The committee noted that the expectations for written communication are "effective" for "degree completion" students, and "strong" for "goals" students. This seems to indicate different learning outcomes and expectations for these student populations, even though they are earning the same degree.

The admissions form and "developing learning objectives" do not seem appropriate to measure student learning outcomes since they are prepared at the beginning of the program, and do not assess what students have learned from the program.

For interdisciplinary degrees, it would also be important to add a learning outcome focusing on the synthesis between the disciplines. This could be assessed through the senior project and reviewed by the INDS council. The undergrad INDS program coordinator might also coordinate with faculty and

programs to help with the assessment of the SLOAs for the degrees. It was further noted that for the degree completion option, interdisciplinarity was not listed as a student learning outcome.

The committee recommends thinking more about distinguishing between the goals and degree completion options, and the three different undergraduate degrees, and to consider developing a General Studies B.A./B.S. (with differentiated student learning outcomes) to meet the needs of the students in the degree completion options, and evaluate the relationship to the current BAAS.

As part of the program review for all Interdisciplinary Studies degrees, it is important to highlight a significant structural change that occurred in July 2024. Previously, the program, director, and advisors were housed under the Office of the Vice Provost. However, in July 2024, the Core Cabinet made the decision to separate the advising duties of UIS from its academic home. While UIS remains academically housed in the Office of the Vice Provost, with the Associate Vice Provost now serving as the program chair, the director position was eliminated, and the individual holding that role transitioned to another position. Advising duties for UIS were moved under the Vice Chancellor for Enrollment Management, with First Year Advisors within the Academic Advising Center now providing advising support. The advising positions previously specific to UIS were not refilled, resulting in the loss of institutional and advising knowledge due to personnel transitions and departures. While this reorganization was part of a larger restructuring effort that was stressful for employees, it also presents a unique opportunity to re-envision the UIS program and align it more closely with institutional goals, student needs, and the theoretical framework of interdisciplinary studies.

- 1. Formation of an Interdisciplinary Studies Curriculum Committee**

In the Fall of 2024, the program established an Interdisciplinary Studies Curriculum Committee to provide ongoing curriculum review at the course and program levels. This committee will help to ensure increased rigor and alignment with program goals and student needs while adding a layer of accountability and oversight to the curriculum development and assessment processes.

- 2. Development and Assessment of Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)**

The program has developed Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs), which are being assessed for the first time as part of this mid-cycle review. These outcomes strive to measure student learning and program effectiveness, addressing the previous concern about the lack of direct assessment.

- 3. Distinguishing Goals and Degree Completion Concentrations**

Over the past year, work has been undertaken to clarify the distinctions between the goals concentration and the degree completion concentration. This includes updates to the requirements for students pursuing the goals option, ensuring a more structured and tailored pathway. A substantial part of this effort has focused on strengthening the advising support provided to students, ensuring that they are better guided through their chosen pathways and the program's unique offerings.

- 4. Enhanced Capstone Course**

The capstone course, which was previously a zero-credit course, is now one-credit. The new structure includes assignments directly aligned with the program's Student Learning Outcomes, providing a more meaningful culminating experience.

- 5. Program Goals Going Forward**

Looking ahead, the program seeks to integrate more learning outcomes that focus on the synthesis between disciplines, fostering a deeper understanding of the nature and theory behind interdisciplinary studies. To support this goal, curricular changes will be made to the initial 100-level First-Year Experience (FYE) course required of UIS students. These changes will include introducing interdisciplinary theory and equipping students early in their academic journey with a strong foundation in the principles and practices of interdisciplinary work.

Establishing a Major in General Studies: To better differentiate the UIS degree pathways from the degree completion pathway, the program aims to develop a General Studies major for students seeking degree completion. This population must be distinct from other General Studies students (such as students in premajor status or Exploratory Studies). While housed within UIS, this new credential will better distinguish degree completion as a separate pathway from a degree that is intentionally interdisciplinary. This distinction will provide greater clarity and allow the UIS program to focus on its interdisciplinary mission while meeting the unique needs of degree completion students.

These changes reflect a concerted effort to enhance the program's quality, rigor, and alignment with the needs of its students while addressing the specific areas of improvement highlighted in the prior review.

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

During the last program review, the absence of SLOs was noted. Considerable work has been done to develop a SLOA plan since the last review. This findings below are reflective of the first SLOA review ever performed with UIS. The recent assessment of SLOs for Interdisciplinary Studies highlights several concerns and recommendations aimed at improving the depth, clarity, and effectiveness of the program's evaluation processes:

- **Reflective Exercises:** Reflective exercises currently lack depth and personal insight, appearing formulaic. It is recommended that reflective prompts be designed to encourage students to explore challenges and learning experiences more deeply.
- **Self-Assessment Outcomes:** Current self-assessment tasks provide minimal focus on actionable outcomes. Providing feedback to guide students in developing actionable goals from their self-assessments will improve the usefulness of these exercises.
- **Capstone Class Redesign:** The capstone class, while useful in collecting artifacts and SLOA data, needs to be redesigned to align with measurable student learning outcomes. Redesigning the course will ensure it provides meaningful opportunities for students to showcase their interdisciplinary learning and apply academic concepts to real-world problems.
- **Application of Interdisciplinary Learning:** Artifacts such as work histories and SMART goal exercises demonstrate students' ability to connect academic concepts to professional aspirations but need more depth in articulating how their degree plans integrate multiple disciplines. Students should document and reflect on how they integrate knowledge and methods across disciplines, with these projects assessed for their effectiveness in applying interdisciplinary learning.

- **Learning Objectives and SLO Plan Revision:** Personal learning objectives are not consistently tied to measurable outcomes, and students often misunderstand how to create specific, measurable objectives. Additionally, the SLO plan itself requires revision, as some current outcomes are not direct measures of student learning. Establishing a structured process for students to regularly update and reflect on their learning objectives, alongside revising the SLO plan to focus on measurable outcomes, will improve the overall assessment process.
- **SLOA Structure:** The SLOA artifact collection process must sufficiently distinguish between the goals, degree completion options, and the AAS degree. Artifacts must be clearly labeled by pathway; some current measures are not directly measurable. Direct measures of student learning should be created for each concentration and degree type in UIS to provide a clearer picture of student achievement.

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:

Since the last review period, significant changes were made to UIS, including the addition of a SLOA plan. The findings for the UIS program at large are included as part of this review; however, as noted in this document, the SLOA plan must be improved to be effective. Many of the current SLOs are not measurable and the organization of artifacts is problematic. In the coming year, the program will work to develop student learning outcomes that are direct and measurable.

Supporting Documents

Please ensure that all relevant supporting documents, such as artifacts, rubrics, and student data, are uploaded to your designated Google folder in WorkZone or directly into Google Drive. *Note: Do not include any information that may identify students in your data.*

Updated SLOA?

If you are updating your SLOA document, please include it with your report and other supporting documents in your designated folder. It does not need to be filed separately in the "SLOA" folder.

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. Please mark the appropriate box below.

Embedded:	X
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

The AS program has seen a steady and significant increase in majors However, degree completion peaked in 2020 and declined significantly between 2020 and 2022.

The program serves [REDACTED] students and a high percentage of [REDACTED] students.

Through the two options available in this degree program, it provides an important pathway to degree completion for an often underserved population. The program engages in active and student-centered advising to help students either complete their degrees in a meaningful way (degree completion option), or to identify an interdisciplinary focus related to future career opportunities (goals option).

The program states that they view students in the two options as separate populations with different learning outcomes that they would like to track separately. This seems to be two separate degrees. A way to resolve this would be to create 2 separate degree options: Interdisciplinary Studies and General Studies, instead of 2 options under one program (the Interdisciplinary Studies program).

The program acknowledges the review committee's observation regarding the distinction between the two options under the Interdisciplinary Studies program and agrees that separate degree pathways may better serve these distinct populations. To address this, the program will work toward establishing two separate majors: one in Interdisciplinary Studies and the other in General Studies. This change will provide greater clarity for students and allow the program to tailor learning outcomes and curricula more effectively for each pathway. The newly established curriculum committee will play a key role in this process, ensuring the proposed structure is thoroughly vetted. These programmatic changes will be submitted in late AY 24-25.

Student Success Data Trends:

Trend	Increase	Decrease	No Change
Persistence		X (slight)	
Pass Rates	X		
Student Credit Hours	X		
Majors	X		
Degrees Awarded			X
Other Trends (Explain in narrative below)			

There is a significant number of [REDACTED] adults enrolled in this program; however, there has been a steady increase in the ages [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] range in the past four years.

Equity Gaps

Please discuss any equity gaps identified in your disaggregated student success data and explain how you plan to address them. Please contact your data liaison or make an appointment with [Julia Manfredini](#) to learn more about analyzing your data.

Across all UIS degree programs, [REDACTED], [REDACTED], and [REDACTED] students pass courses at lower rates than [REDACTED] or [REDACTED] students. In 2024, those equity gaps narrowed significantly in course pass rates. Additionally, across all UIS programs, historically [REDACTED] and [REDACTED] students also passed classes at lower rates. Again, this equity gap has closed significantly in FY23 and FY24. The program's goal is to continue to maintain gains and continue to close this equity gap.

Optional Data Explanation

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

Currently, the UIS program uses the term "concentrations" to distinguish between pathways within the program. For example, the Interdisciplinary Studies major with a General Studies concentration is known as UAF's degree completion option. The use of concentrations is problematic because they are not tracked by the university and, therefore, not available to PAIR. The program must rely upon advising records to identify which concentration a student is in. Such records have hitherto been incomplete and/or inaccessible to or viewable by others. Creating a General Studies major and an Interdisciplinary major (without using concentrations) will create more clarity for students, for advisors, and for those collecting and reviewing programmatic data.

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

The program has identified three high impact practices to support the success of their students. The program emphasizes the role of the capstone course and undergraduate research to support their students' academic development.

High-Impact Practices Used in this Program

Please select all high-impact practices your program is currently using from the list below. For any practices you select, provide details in the corresponding narrative section. In the narrative, discuss how your program is implementing these practices, including any successes, known issues, and solutions. If you are considering incorporating any of these practices in the future, share your plans. If your program is not using any of the listed high-impact practices, please use the 'Other or None of These' field to explain how your program supports student success.

Capstone Courses & Projects	X	Research (Graduate Level)	
Collaborative Assignments & Projects		Writing-Intensive Courses	
Diversity/Global Learning		Publications	
ePortfolios		Communications	
First-Year Seminars & Experiences	X	Publications	
Internships		Scholarly Activities	
Service or Community-based Learning		Other (Please describe in box below)	
Undergraduate Research			

Collaborative Assignments & Projects

(250 Word Limit)

Undergraduate Research

(250 Word Limit)

Diversity/Global Learning

(250 Word Limit)

ePortfolios

(250 Word Limit)

First Year-Seminars & Experiences

The UIS program's First-Year Experience (FYE) class is intended to serve as an essential orientation for students to the university and the Interdisciplinary Studies program. This class is required for students in the goals option. Over the next year, the program will refine this class to better connect students' academic and professional goals to the nature of interdisciplinary work. Specific efforts will include reorienting the curriculum to focus on the conceptual framework of interdisciplinarity and ensuring students engage meaningfully with their goals concepts early in their academic journey. Additionally, steps will be taken to make this class a consistent starting point for all UIS students, addressing the current inconsistency in when students enroll. By integrating assignments focused on goal-setting, committee formation, and proposal development, the FYE class will provide students with a structured process to establish and refine their individualized academic pathways.

Writing-Intensive Courses

(250 Word Limit)

Service-Learning and/or Community-based Learning

(250 Word Limit)

Internships

(250 Word Limit)

Capstone Courses & Projects

The UIS capstone class has undergone significant improvements since the last program review, transitioning from a 0-credit to a 1-credit course to provide greater motivation for student performance and to appropriately compensate faculty. This course serves as the culminating experience for UIS students, integrating their academic work across disciplines and connecting it to their future academic, career, and personal goals. Regardless of their chosen concentration, students use the capstone to synthesize their interdisciplinary studies into a coherent narrative, showcasing their ability to apply knowledge to real-world contexts. The addition of credit for the course has been instrumental in increasing student engagement and accountability. Faculty are now better supported in delivering high-quality instruction and guidance. These changes have enhanced the capstone's effectiveness in preparing students to articulate the value of their interdisciplinary education as they transition into the next stages of their professional or academic careers.

Other or None of these (explain)

(250 Word Limit)

Program Profile and Financial Data

The following feedback was received during your last full program review. **You are not required to respond to this feedback, but we encourage you to review it as it may provide valuable insights.** This feedback will also be available when your program undergoes its next full review in two years.

Previous Financial Feedback

Operates at Low Cost This program continues to operate at a low cost.

Previous Profile Feedback

Program is mission-centric to UAF or college/school

Submission

Submitter & Collaborator Names

Jen Tilbury

Submitter Email

jtilbury@alaska.edu

Interdisciplinary Studies Bachelor's Degree GENS Option updated after program AY22 full program review

Student Learning Outcome Assessment (SLOA) Summary:

Intended Learning Outcomes	Details	Data that will be assessed.	Rubric
Students will demonstrate effective communication skills.	Students must answer essay questions via a Rationale Form in order to be admitted to the Degree Completion program (INDS major GENS concentration). In the GENS F400 capstone they submit oral and written assignments.	Educational Goals and History form assess overall quality of writing in short essays. & GENS F401 Interdisciplinary Capstone Course assignments (required since fall 2016)- assess 1.the writing sample assignment and 2. elevator pitch oral assignment	Assignments like reflective essays demonstrate clarity and organization in written communication. Work history documents highlight professional communication skills. Concerns: Reflective exercises appear formulaic, lacking depth in personal insights and growth strategies. Recommendations: Design reflective prompts that encourage deeper exploration of personal challenges and learning experiences.
Students will be able to do critical self assessment.	Identify and communicate personal strengths GENS F400 requires that students first identify their values and strengths and then weave them into their resume. Assessment will focus on the effectiveness of their resume.	GENS F401 assignments focused on values, skills & strengths integration into their resume.	Evidence suggests students articulate connections between academic knowledge and professional aspirations, as seen in work histories and capstone projects Some examples show synthesis of ideas across disciplines, reflecting attempts to integrate diverse fields of study into a cohesive understanding. Concerns: Lack of explicit documentation showing how students bridge multiple fields in a structured way.
Students will demonstrate practical	Students must articulate goals on their	Review the Educational Goals and	Artifacts, including the Goals Option Approval form, work

applications of academic concepts.	Rationale form, and then establish and plan out SMART goals in the capstone course. The GENR F400 SMART Goals and Action plan assignments require students to visualize a concept and develop a plan to make it a reality.	History form response about academic and career goals & GENR F401 SMART Goals and Action plan assignments.	histories and SMART goal exercises, show students applying concepts to their professional and academic aspirations. Students articulate career-relevant goals and connect them to academic work. Concerns: While artifacts like work histories and SMART goal exercises show that students connect academic concepts to their professional aspirations, they often lack depth in articulating how their degree plan integrates multiple disciplines to achieve these goals. Additionally, there is limited evidence of real-world implementations that demonstrate the interdisciplinary nature of their learning. Few examples showcase practical applications of interdisciplinary concepts outside the classroom. Recommendations: Encourage students to engage in experiential learning or projects that specifically address real-world problems through interdisciplinary approaches. Provide opportunities for students to document and reflect on how their projects integrate knowledge and methods from multiple disciplines. Assess these projects to evaluate their effectiveness in applying academic concepts to real-world, interdisciplinary challenges.
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Students will connect concepts across disciplines.	The INDS major capstone course, INDS F401 prompts students to consider the connections of the courses they have taken as well as the connection of their multidisciplinary course work to their long term goals.	INDS F401 assignments focused on values, skills & strengths integration into their writing sample and resume.	Students articulate their academic and professional objectives in assignments, demonstrating how interdisciplinary approaches shape and enhance their individualized educational pathways. Students articulate their academic and professional objectives in assignments, reflecting individualized educational pathways.
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Mid-Cycle Review Committee

The Mid-Cycle Review committee plays a crucial role in supporting each program as they prepare for their Full Review. Our goal is to help programs feel recognized and supported throughout this process. To guide your feedback, we've included strength-based feedback tags; please select all that apply to this program.

Overall Recommendations (tags)

Address Equity Gap	x	Consider Curricular Revisions	
Develop Online Offerings/Options		Improve Time to Degree	
Increase Enrollment	x	Increase Graduates	x
Increase retention/persistence	x	Strengthen Advising Practices	
May be asked to share Effective Practices		Recommendation to University-Wide Committee	

Explanation of Overall Recommendations (narrative)

Please see the section below on Student Success and Equity Feedback for additional details.

Student Learning Outcomes Feedback (tags)

Strong		Developing	
Requires Minor Revision		Requires Major Revision	x

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Feedback (tags)

Strong Alignment with SLOA Plan		Clear, Concise Presentation of Findings	x
Compelling Learning Story		Missing a Direct Measure	
Missing Active Verbs	x	Missing Curricular Connection	
Missing Collaboration within Department			

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Feedback (narrative)

Provided an in-depth response to previous recommendations which included curricular revisions, revision to the SLOA/SLOs, and differentiating among the three UIS programs. Given all of the changes over the past year to the structure and administration of the UIS program, it is not surprising that these changes have not been made yet. There will be a need to re-envision the degree program and to document these changes and outcomes prior to the full program review in 2026.

Provided 4 SLOs. SLO #1 is ok, although it could be more clearly articulated/defined, i.e., a more well-defined statement (e.g., what are the communication skills that must students attain?). SLO #s 2-4 are very vague and need to be refined to be clearer; they may be useful SLOs but it is hard to tell what these accomplish or provide. My recommendation is for the program to revise these SLOs to include "action" words (<https://tips.uark.edu/blooms-taxonomy-verb-chart/>). There is a clear need to revise the SLOs and develop a more thorough SLO assessment and implementation plan with well-defined artifacts and data to support the SLOA. Concerns were identified in the SLOA document; how those concerns are addressed will go a long way to demonstrating continuous improvement and closing of the loop.

Provided a discussion of the SLOA/SLOs and curricular changes. All these components have largely been lacking, so their addition, with justification, and a plan to continue to develop and hone these aspects is needed. As this program continues to be refined and disaggregated from the other two UIS programs, it will be important to make the necessary changes to continue to distinguish among programs yet have similarities among degree programs so that students are getting an equal, similar, yet distinct experience. There is much to do here prior to the full program review in 2026 to document continuous improvement and closing of the loop.

What assistance can the Accreditation Office provide to assist with SLOA revisions?

Student Success & Equity Feedback (narrative)

Persistence - The program identified a slight decrease in persistence. The decrease was actually approximately 10%.

Pass rates - Where is the program obtaining the information on pass rates? There does not appear to be any data in the student success dashboard.

Student credit hours - This could be considered a slight increase.

Majors - There is an increase here, by 3.

Degrees - There is no change indicated in the report, however, based on the data there is a decrease from 39 to 28 in the last year.

Actually seeing a decrease in ages 21-22 based on the data.

Pass rates not displayed on the student success dashboard.

If the data points do not fully capture the program's nuances, consider what additional metrics might be necessary for a comprehensive understanding. What assistance can the Accreditation Office provide to better address this need?

High-Impact Practices Feedback (narrative)

Capstone courses & projects along with first-year seminars and experiences were identified. A careful analysis of the first-year seminar & experiences was provided along with showcasing revisions to courses and curriculum that have a direct correlation to student impact and measures of success. This was a very effective review.

The interdisciplinary capstone work has really been revamped and the tie to a meaningful and intentional product seems evident for the student - therefore, it naturally drives this high impact category. The program has made strides in this area, and it's great to see the success.

One suggestion - need specific examples (e.g., what are the students doing specifically for each HIP?).