

Interdisciplinary Studies – Doctor of Philosophy

Current Compliance Year: 2024-2025

Mid-Cycle review

Resources

Before completing this form:

- Review the resources available to assist you.
- The link in WorkZone directs you to your program’s folder for this year’s review, which includes:
 - A full copy of your previous report with the SLOA of record attached.
 - A folder with previous SLOAs as individual documents.
- The [Resources folder](#) contains:
 - Templates for creating or updating SLOAs.
 - Training materials from the SLOA and Program Review Training held in August.
- Additional tools and information can be found on the [Academic Program Review Website](#).

If you have questions or concerns during this process, please reach out to uaf-accreditation@alaska.edu

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.

The INDS Ph.D. program is vital to UAF. It allows students to integrate multiple disciplines into a doctoral level research agenda. It serves the UAF vision to pursue "innovative research." It is also a low cost program. It is recommended that the Graduate School, INDS Council, and faculty advisors continue to ensure that the students are pursuing interdisciplinary (opposed to disciplinary or multidisciplinary) academic and research programs. For interdisciplinary degrees, it is suggested that there be an additional Student Learning Outcome focused on the synthesis across the disciplines that comprise the student’s degree. As long as the Graduate School continues to manage the INDS Ph.D. program, it should collect data to assess its SLOAs. This should include collecting information from students at multiple points in their doctoral education, along with information from the students’ committee members and, possibly, the departments/disciplines/programs that comprise the student GSP.

Response to Previous Recommendations (if any):

The SLOAs have been revised (see folder). The first major objective/outcome is now; “Students will acquire mastery of concepts and state of knowledge in their chosen disciplines and understand interdisciplinary interactions between these disciplines that define their subject area”. This outcome will be evaluated using a “INDS SLOA Assessment” form (see folder).

A "INDS SLOA Data Collection" form has been developed for distribution to graduate committees for evaluation of the Interdisciplinarity of the students work at the written and oral comprehensive examinations and the dissertation defense examination.

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 collaboration in department

SLOA plans from 2010 and 2021 were included. The most recent SLOA plan (2021) comprises 4 objectives/outcomes. Objective/Outcome 1, which states, "Students entering the PhD program can communicate at a graduate level and identify an interdisciplinary topic," is not a Student Learning Outcome of the program. Rather, it is an (important) indicator for the admissions process. Objectives/Outcomes 2-4 are potentially strong indicators of the learning objectives per the mission statement. The Graduate School reports that it has not started collecting data to inform the 2021 SLOAs. Notably, INDS is a challenging program to assess given that after the Graduate School and INDS Ph.D. Council accept students, the students are "housed" in diverse departments and programs across the campus. It is recommended that The Graduate School and INDS Council work closely with departments and programs "housing" the INDS Ph.D. students to collect data and assess the extent to which the program is achieving its SLOAs.

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

We have revised the SLOAs based on the feedback in 2022. We have removed this first SLOA. The new SLOAs have not yet been implemented. We will distribute them to all committee chairs in this academic year and begin collecting the data this academic year.

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 are no formal curricular changes to be reported. As an individual interdisciplinary program, the curriculum for each student is determined by their graduate committee and reported in their graduate study plan. Students choose a program with courses from multiple disciplines/departments.

In the past year, two groups of applicants have organized themselves as cohorts and adopt common curricular elements in their study plans. In Spring 2024 a group of five faculty/staff in the School of Education applied to the PhD program to study a variety of interdisciplinary topics associated with educational policies and practices in Alaska. The five were admitted to the program for Fall 2024. This group of students is proceeding as a cohort with common seminar courses. In Fall 2024 a group of 11 (including both UAF faculty/staff and community members) applied with the goal of studying a variety of Alaska-focused topics that include business, education, engineering, health care, Indigenous studies, security, and sustainability.

The 11 were admitted for Spring 2025. This group are proceeding with common seminar and research methods courses offered in Homeland Security and Emergency Management.

In Fall 2024 the admissions process was revised with the use of formal rubrics to evaluate the student applications and provide more consistency in the evaluation of the applications.

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

Per the data, and on all measures (majors, SCH, and degrees), the INDS Ph.D. program's (Interdisciplinary Studies) numbers decreased over the period (2018 to 2022). Majors dropped from 66 in 2018 to 41 in 2022. Average annual SCH load decreased from 8.2 in 2018 to 7.5 in 2022. The number of degrees dropped from 9 in 2018 to 2 in 2022. The Graduation-Informed Persistence remained fairly stable: 96% in AY18 to 89.5% in AY22. Demographic information is only available at the aggregate for

all Graduate School programs; thus, we were unable to assess the demographic breakdown for the INDS and Interdisciplinary Engineering Ph.D. programs. The program does note that 14% of the INDS Ph.D. program's students self-identify as being [REDACTED], compared to 10% in other Ph.D. programs.

Student Success Data Trends:

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

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.

In 2024 the majors (PhD, MS and MA) identify as 25% (14) [REDACTED], 4% (2) [REDACTED], 4% (2) [REDACTED], 55% (31) [REDACTED] and 13% (7) not reported. Since 2022 the number of [REDACTED] students has increased from 15% (7) and the number of undeclared has decreased from 21% (10). In 2024 77% (43) of the majors identify as [REDACTED] an increase from 73% (35) in 2022. In 2024 13% (7) of the majors identify as [REDACTED] an increase from 10% (5) in 2022.

Graduation informed persistence is 90% or greater for the whole student body over the reporting years.

Over FY 2022, 2023, and 2024 14 PhD students have graduated, 11 identified by race with 3 (27%) as [REDACTED], 1 (9%) as [REDACTED], 7 (64%) as [REDACTED]. Of the 14 graduates 9 (64%) identified as [REDACTED], 5 (36%) identified as [REDACTED]. There do not appear to be any equity gaps.

Optional Data Explanation

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

The number of degrees awarded has increased from 2 in 2022 to 6 in 2024.
 The number of students in the program (Interdisciplinary and Engineering Interdisciplinary) has increased from 42 in 2022 to 47 in 2024.
 The graduation informed persistence has remained stable increasing from 89% to 92% since 2022.
 The average SCH load for (Interdisciplinary and Engineering Interdisciplinary combined) remained relatively constant at 7.2 in 2022 and 7.0 in 2024.

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 report indicates that first-year seminars and experiences and undergraduate research are high-impact factors for the Ph.D. program. As these indicators are related to undergraduate education, the committee is confused by their inclusion as high impact practices.

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

(250 Word Limit)

Writing-Intensive Courses

(250 Word Limit)

Service-Learning and/or Community-based Learning

(250 Word Limit)

Internships

(250 Word Limit)

Capstone Courses & Projects

(250 Word Limit)

Other or None of these (explain)

Students are engaged in research and publishing and presenting their work. Examination of reports of advisory committees shows that since Fall 2023, 8/32 students reported publications and 14/32 students reported public presentations of their work.

The number of majors has increased from 41 in 2022 to 46 in 2024. The decrease from before 2021 correlates with the increasing enrollment in Indigenous Studies, which has attracted students who previously would have enrolled in the Interdisciplinary studies program.

Students conduct graduate level research and are actively engaged in collaborative research with Alaskan communities.

Over FY 2022, 2023, and 2024 14 PhD students have graduated from five Colleges and Schools (1 CBSM, 2 CEM, 8 CLA, 2 CNSM, 1 SoE).

In the last review the first-year seminars and undergraduate research were chosen (in error) to highlight seminars and research in this graduate program.

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, Productive Faculty

Previous Profile Feedback

Program is mission-centric to UAF or college/school, Program is unique in the state

Submission

Submitter & Collaborator Names

Richard Collins

Submitter Email

rlcollins@alaska.edu

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan
Interdisciplinary Ph.D.
 Graduate School and Interdisciplinary Studies
 November 2024

MISSION STATEMENT: The graduate interdisciplinary PhD program responds to increasing societal needs for research that addresses complex problems and supports students in conducting multidisciplinary (drawing on multiple disciplines), interdisciplinary (investigating the interactions between multiple disciplines), and/or transdisciplinary (engaging stakeholders outside the university as collaborators) research and scholarship. The program supports students to develop and execute an individual program of study that meets their needs and goals. The program also supports students to pursue research and scholarship in areas where degrees are not offered by existing programs at UAF. The graduate interdisciplinary program is administered by the graduate school and supported by UAF faculty and departments.

GOAL STATEMENT: To prepare students to conduct independent and original research that addresses complex problems and meets their intellectual and professional goals.

Intended Objectives/Outcomes	Assessment Criteria and Procedures	Implementation (what, when, who)
Students will acquire mastery of concepts and state of knowledge in their chosen disciplines and understand interdisciplinary interactions between these disciplines that define their subject area.	Students will complete multi-disciplinary set of courses identified by their graduate committee. Students will pass a written and oral comprehensive exam, that tests the interdisciplinary knowledge related to their subject developed and administered by their graduate advisory committee	The student and committee develop a graduate study plan with a multi-disciplinary set of courses. Courses must be completed with a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or greater. The graduate advisory committee administer the comprehensive exam. Committee complete evaluation using INDS SLOA assessment form.
Students will make original and substantial contributions to knowledge in their field of study, which will be communicated in oral and written form	Students will complete graduate level coursework and conduct independent research over sustained period. Students will write a dissertation, publicly present the work, and defend their thesis/dissertation in a public exam setting. Students will present/publish their work.	Graduate advisory committee evaluate and report the students work on an annual basis. Department and graduate school will monitor student progress on an annual basis. The graduate advisory committee administer the defense exam. Committee complete evaluation using INDS PhD assessment form. Students report papers published, and presentations given on an annual basis.

UNIVERSITY OF ALASKA FAIRBANKS
Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Plan

Students will obtain employment in their chosen fields, advance within their existing employment, or otherwise meet personal objectives for completing the degree.	Longitudinal tracking information is collected from each graduate of the PhD program to determine their initial placement following graduation.	The students' initial placement is recorded on the INDS PhD SLOA assessment form. If student is not employed upon graduation, the student will be contacted within 1 year after graduation to determine initial placement.
--	---	--

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	x
Increase Enrollment	x	Increase Graduates	x
Increase retention/persistence		Strengthen Advising Practices	
May be asked to share Effective Practices	x	Recommendation to University-Wide Committee	

Explanation of Overall Recommendations (narrative)

Please see the section below on Student Success and Equity Feedback for additional details as well as High-Impact Practices.
--

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	
Compelling Learning Story		Missing a Direct Measure	x
Missing Active Verbs		Missing Curricular Connection	x
Missing Collaboration within Department	x		

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Feedback (narrative)

For the response to previous recommendations, the SLOA was revised per the recommendation of the other review; however, no context was given into this process. This statement in this section of the report was identical in both the MA and MS INDS program review documents. There is reference to an INDS SLOA Data Collection form but it does not appear to have been used to collect any data yet (it indicated that it had been developed [and not implemented] even though the recommendation was from 2022). Provided 3 SLOs. SLO #s 1-2 are 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 #3 is not a SLO and should be replaced; note that could be an important program outcome and may play an important role for program tracking but does not meet the criteria for SLOs. Per NWCCU guidance, programs needs 3-6 SLOs for assessment purposes (as a result, there is a need for at least one new SLO for this program). There is a need to develop a more thorough SLO assessment and implementation plan with well-defined artifacts and data to support the SLOA. For example, the completion of courses (as noted for SLO #s 1-2) are not assessment criteria. This also applies to presentations and publications because they are not a measure of the SLO. For the comprehensive exam (SLO #1) and

defense/thesis (SLO #2) there needs to be a more quantitative metric in place. For example, a rubric which would serve as the artifact and which would be used to generate standardized data for assessment of the SLO. Note that the SLOA/SLOs are identical for the MA and MS INDS programs and the PhD INDS program (there needs to be differentiation in at least one of the SLOs between programs).

For SLOA findings, indicated that developed new SLOs but there has been no assessment of the SLOs to date. Since this revision happened in 2022, there should have been 1-2 years of data collected prior to this review. It will be important in future reviews to address this component to ensure to NWCCU that continuous improvement and closing of the loop is occurring within this degree program. It was noted that there were no curricular changes associated with this program given its interdisciplinary and unique status. However, there is commonality in PhD INDS program curricula, despite the unique nature of each program (e.g., credits, comprehensive exam, etc.) and this should be examined and revised as needed (if needed). Did note the self-organized cohorting, which is more a high-impact practice than a curricular change. Again, this ties back to continuous improvement and closing of the loop. This section was identical in both the MA and MS INDS program review documents.

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

Student Success & Equity Feedback (narrative)

Based on saying there was an increase in majors, there should be an increase shown in student credit hours as well. The increases are slight for both. Degrees awarded have increased over the last couple of years, although it is consistent with 2021 findings and a decrease from 2020.

Please be more specific here - Since 2022, the number of Alaska Native students has increased from 15% (7) and the number of undeclared has decreased from 21% (10). What have they increased to? Or is there an increase or decrease from a different number? You are more specific in the next two points - in 2024, 77% (43) of the majors identified as female, an increase from 73% (35) in 2022. In 2024, 13% (7) of the majors identified as first generation, an increase from 10% (5) in 2022.

The narrative in the optional data explanation section differs from the data trends table. Please be consistent. 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)

Collaborative assignments & projects, service or community-based learning, research (grad level), publications and other were all selected as HIP indicators.

It would be great to see narrative with collaborative assignments & projects and service or community-based learning. The other category was very informative as to numbers that are reviewed and that help to measure HIP. Is it that the other category covers all of these? One suggestion - need specific examples (e.g., what are the students doing specifically for each HIP?).

Are there target growth areas that the program would like to see?