



Academic Program Review

Program Name: Philosophy - Bachelor of Arts

Academic Year 2025/2026

Recent Recommendations

Using your most recent review, please respond to all feedback and recommendations.

Response:

We have updated our SLOA to more accurately reflect how we assess our outcomes and to include direct indicators as part of our assessment. Please see revised plan for details.

We agree that the sample size for our major is too small to produce useful data. This is especially exacerbated (as the committee points out) by the opacity of double majors within the data—double majors are one of the key ways in which Philosophy & Humanities provides value to UAF's mission. However, we also do not think that these data are the best measure of our program's place in UAF's mission. As stated by former Chancellor [REDACTED], the true strength of the Philosophy & Humanities program is its centrality to the mission of any university and especially a public arctic research university. As such, we feel that collecting data that captures our service courses would prove more useful as a metric for program review.

We have provided more details in this mid-cycle review to capture how Philosophy & Humanities requires students to learn about diversity and global issues, as well as how it integrates with service and community-based learning.

We appreciate the dean's unequivocal support for our program. We will continue our work with the PIO Officers to support program growth and discover to what extent the Philosophy curriculum can support additional programs.

We have reviewed Bloom's taxonomy verb chart and updated our SLOA language where appropriate. We have included more details concerning our HIPs and specified where in the program they happen in our narrative and in our updated SLOAs.

Student Learning Outcomes

Describe the assessment of your student learning outcomes (SLOs). Discuss your findings, changes you are making, and what you hope to see as a result.

Response:

The assessment of our SLOs happens through two primary methods. Given the nature of the discipline, non-qualitative assessments are of limited-to-no value in determining student progress. Philosophy as a discipline involves the learning and evaluation of drawn-out, careful argumentation rooted in a number of historical positions. Questionnaires, even lengthy ones, are better designed to test a learner's acquisition of facts, whereas Philosophy is about acquiring the skills to evaluate the evidential and justificatory connections between discrete facts. As such, the first method used to assess learning outcomes is direct interaction between faculty and student in the form of (1) in-class elenchus and (2) writing assignments with instructor feedback for improvement. The second method is through success in the capstone course, where students are expected to demonstrate (again, through in-class elenchus and through writing assignments) their ability to synthesize their Philosophical education and apply it to topics in contemporary philosophy. In light of the recommendations from the 23-24 program review, we are shifting our SLOA activities away from exit questionnaires to better track the subtleties of the skills that are captured by our learning outcomes. These skills are better assessed throughout the major via feedback given by an expert in the field on assignments and class participation than by exit questionnaires.

Did you make any curricular changes based on your most recent SLOA? If so, discuss what changes were made. If no changes were made, please discuss the strengths of your curriculum based on the assessment of your outcomes.

Response:

Yes. With the help of the Center for Teaching and Learning's So TL program and the Gardner Institute, we redesigned our gateway, general education courses based on the most recent SLOAs. In particular, we wanted to strengthen the trend concerning passrates, especially in these lower-division gateway courses that were highlighted in the 23-24 review. Additionally, through this redesign we hoped to address another trend that we noticed—students had a tendency to fixate on particular factual tidbits rather than on the assessment and creation of carefully crafted, long arguments (rooted in solid historically correct philosophical foundations).

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

Communication outcomes in the SLOA plan are: [Embedded](#)

Check the checkbox to certify completion of the following tasks:

☒ Upload supporting documents to the Supporting Documents folder. This includes artifacts, rubrics, and other documents related to your SLOA.

☒ Upload your most recent SLOA to the Supporting Documents folder, even if no changes have been made since the last review.

Have changes been made to your SLOA document since your last review? [Yes](#)

If so, please summarize what changes were made.

Response:

Taking into consideration the feedback from our previous full program review and the provided assessment guidelines, we have updated our SLOAs to better reflect our assessment practices and clarify how they are directly connected to our SLOs. We have abandoned the questionnaire and focused instead on qualitative assessment tasks (direct student-instructor interaction; exams that assess knowledge relevant to a program's learning outcomes; and other graded assignments in a summative capstone course). The supporting documents provided are examples of the sort of assignments that best allow us to assess programmatic outcomes.

High Impact Practices

Please indicate which high impact practices are currently being implemented in relation to the program's student learning outcomes.

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☒ Capstone Courses & Projects | ☐ Graduate Level Research |
| ☐ Collaborative Assignments & Projects | ☒ Writing-Intensive Courses |
| ☒ Diversity/Global Learning | ☐ Publications |
| ☐ ePortfolios | ☐ Communications |
| ☐ First-Year Seminars and Experiences | ☐ Scholarly Activities |
| ☐ Internships | ☐ Studios |
| ☒ Service or Community-Based Learning | ☐ Practicum |
| ☐ Undergraduate Research | ☐ Other |
| ☐ Labs | ☐ None of these |

Discuss how the HIPs in the program are reflected in the SLOA. If you have identified HIPs that are not included in the SLOA, please consider an update.

Response:

Students need to demonstrate mastery through writing assignments and exam prompts in individual courses of the most profound cultural perspectives that make up the curriculum of our Philosophy courses (which cover Philosophical reasonings from across history and geography). All of our upper-division courses are writing intensive as an essential component of the discipline, following the best practices of the discipline since its inception. The ARCHER program (a collaborative, multidisciplinary effort based today primarily in the Philosophy & Humanities department) is designed as an outreach for one of the most culturally impactful and diverse (e.g. Native and Western perspectives) activities in our state, subsistence hunting. The capstone for the Philosophy B.A. is our upper-division course concerning current trends and best-practices within Philosophy, and how they connect to other disciplines. These are reflected in the SLOAs as the assessment of our learning outcomes rely heavily on the demonstration of competence in these HIPs.

Student Success

Please reference the [Resources tab](#) for information on accessing the Student Success Data Dashboard and contacting your designated data liaisons.

Student Success Data Trends

Persistence: Increase

Pass Rates: Increase

Student Credit Hours: No Change

Majors: Increase

Degrees Awarded: Decrease

Other Trends (if applicable):

N/A

Achievement Disparities

Discuss any achievement disparities identified in your disaggregated student success data and explain how you plan to address them.

Response:

As the committee mentioned, the numbers collected remain small, so that the usability of these data are suspect. However, some notable trends do appear, including a rise in the number of majors (including among "a more diverse student body"). Additionally, pass rates are improving, which we attribute to the changes that we have discussed throughout this report. Finally, while our Degrees Awarded may appear to be on a downward trend, this has more to do with the recent reinstatement that coincided with Covid. Given the increase in majors, we anticipate this trend reversing to presuspension, pre-Covid levels.

Closing the Loop

Please discuss how your student learning outcomes are reflected in high impact practices and student success data.

Response:

One key way we have of closing the loop is directly integrating our capstone course into our assessment plan. Since all of our majors (and the majority of our minors) take the capstone, this high-impact practice also serves as the best way to assess our programmatic learning outcomes, since it guarantees that we can capture student data towards the end of their degree. By the same token, Philosophy as a Humanities discipline is necessarily writing-intensive, so tracking student writing through instructor feedback and graded work is an unavoidable HIP (writing-intensive courses). Because the content within Philosophy & Humanities covers such a broad period of time (~500 BCE to 2025 CE) and a wide range of cultures, it too is unavoidably connected to Diversity/Global Learning. Finally, with the development of the ARCHER program, the Philosophy & Humanities program includes content that covers both Diversity/Global Learning and Service or Community-Based Learning.

Academic Program Profile

The following questions help show how your program supports the university's mission, connects with other UA programs, engages with the community, contributes through service courses, and supports student success after graduation. Please use this section to highlight the value your program brings to students, the university, and beyond.

UAF's Mission:

The University of Alaska Fairbanks is a Land, Sea, and Space Grant university and an international center for research, education, and the arts, emphasizing the circumpolar North and its diverse peoples. UAF integrates teaching, research, and public service as it educates students for active citizenship and prepares them for lifelong learning and careers.

In what ways does your program advance UAF's mission?

Response:

Philosophy is essential to the mission of our university. As Chancellor [REDACTED] stressed, our program is a necessary investment for any tertiary education institution. We are the only program that teaches the substance and nature of critical, factual, and ethical thinking that underlie the practice of every other discipline and are at the core of the university's mission. We are also the only program whose disciplinary competence teaches the breadth of knowledge required for any PhD-granting institution (as opposed to other types of doctorates).

How is your program related to others in the UA system?

Response:

While Philosophy exists at UAA, both programs have coordinated their offerings and curricular focus to ensure that they avoid duplication. For example, the faculty at UAA tend to focus on applied ethics and other normative courses, while UAF Philosophy specializes in Philosophy of Science and Philosophy of Mind courses. The department also has essential ties to Biology & Wildlife; Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern Studies; and Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies.

Who are your key community or external partners?

Response:

We have organized public debates and collaborative public lectures with local and international religious and critical scientific reasoning organizations (e.g. Sacred Heart, UU Fellowship of Fairbanks, Gonzaga University, Richard Dawkins Foundation for Reason and Science). Topics discussed, albeit being both delicate and highly contentious (e.g. abortion, stem cell research, atheism) were very well received by the public in general.

What role do your services courses play, if any?

Response:

"We have three courses in the GER (PHIL F102X; PHIL F104X; HUM F201X) and our Ethics course (PHIL F322X) serves as the foundational ethical theory course available for students to satisfy their baccalaureate degree requirement. Courses from our department are cross-listed with or requirements for six other programs (Biology & Wildlife; Ancient, Medieval, and Early Modern Studies; Women, Gender, and Sexuality Studies; Political Science; Asian Studies; Nursing).

In addition, several of our majors are either double-majors or pursuing double-degrees, and of course all of our minors are earning a degree in another program. As colleagues from other disciplines have informed us, the philosophical training (reflected in our learning outcomes) they receive through our program allows them to stand out from their peers in their multidisciplinary performance."

How do your graduates succeed after leaving the program?

Response:

We do not have the capacity to track post-graduation data with any sort of accuracy. However, anecdotally, our graduates go on to advanced degrees or careers in philosophy, law, medicine, and the intelligence service. For example, we have had former students report to us careers in [REDACTED] in [REDACTED]. We have also heard from others pursuing post-graduate degrees (e.g. J.D., M.A., Ph.D.), including from institutions as prestigious as Oxford.

Submitter and Collaborator Names:

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Committee Review
Program Name: Philosophy - Bachelor of Arts
Academic Year 2025/2026

Overall Recommendations

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

- | | |
|---|---|
| ☐ Insufficient Narratives | ☐ Report Incomplete |
| ☐ Address Achievement Gap | ☒ Consider Curricular Revisions |
| ☐ Develop Online Offerings/
Options | ☐ Improve Time to Degree |
| ☒ Increase Enrollment | ☐ Increase Graduates |
| ☐ Increase Retention/Persistence | ☐ Strengthen Advising Practices |
| ☒ May be asked to share Effective Practices | ☐ Recommendation to
University-Wide Committee |

Explanation of Overall Recommendations

Response:

The program responded to recommendations by revising their SLOA since the 2023 full-program review. This assessment also includes the role of the program in serving UAF broadly as well as serving their majors. The program does still need to follow through with developing plans to increase the number of majors; they will need to document this for the 2027 full-program review. The SLOA/SLOs provided were an improvement from 2023; however, evidence/data is needed to document that the SLOs are being met and that the program is undergoing continuous improvement and closing the loop.

Student Learning Outcomes Feedback

- | | |
|--|---|
| ☐ Strong | ☐ Developing |
| ☒ Requires Minor
Revision | ☐ Requires Major
Revision |

Student Learning Outcomes Assessment Feedback

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

SLOA Feedback Narrative:

"Provided 4 SLOs, all of which have clear and well-defined procedures for assessment and implementation plan (that includes where in the program the SLO must be completed and assessed in the program). The assessment plan and implementation processes for each SLO were strong, with well-developed artifacts for assessing each SLO. Evidence (data) on how the SLOs are being met will be required for the full-program review in 2027, both in narrative form and as a supplementary document(s).

Did note that curricular revisions were made through a redesign for their gateway general education course. While they did note the reason for the redesign and what they hoped to address, they did not provide any explanation on the nature of the redesign. Inclusion of that information would have strengthened this section of the program review.

The program provided a discussion on how SLOs are reflected in the HIPs and student success data. Documenting continuous improvement and the closing of the loop are important components of the program review process, not just as an exercise, but to demonstrate that assessment results are used to make meaningful, evidence-based changes that enhance program quality and student learning. This process ensures accountability, fosters a culture of ongoing improvement, and provides clear evidence to accreditors and stakeholders that actions lead to measurable outcomes. For the full-program review in 2027, should include additional evidence to document this outcome specifically for each SLO to support the narrative overviews.

"

Student Success and Equity Feedback

Narrative:

■ The program accurately noted issues within the Student Success Dashboard data, citing the small student cohort and the prevalence of double majors as contributing factors to skewed results.

Despite these challenges, the program observed positive trends, including increases in student persistence, pass rates, and the number of majors. The program identifies the growing number of double majors as both a factor influencing data trends and a positive contributor to a more diverse student population. Efforts to support varied learning needs include introducing writing-based assignments and class elenchus in place of questionnaires, better aligning coursework with philosophical application and skill development. The implementation of the ARCHER program, hosting of public debates and lectures, and integration of philosophy with disciplines such as Biology, Wildlife, Gender Studies, and Political Science have also strengthened support for diverse student success. Anecdotally, the program reports that graduates continue to advanced degrees such as J.D., M.A., and Ph.D. programs. The program also proposes collaborating with the Public Information Office (PIO) to increase awareness and support for program growth. While no specific measures are detailed at this time, it is recommended that such initiatives be implemented and outcomes reported in the 2027 full program review. Overall, the program demonstrates inclusivity through its interdisciplinary integration, the establishment of the ARCHER program, and the increasing trend of double majors, which together contribute to a more diverse and engaged student cohort.

High Impact Practices Feedback

Narrative:

■ Upon reviewing the SLOA in its totality and the High Impact Practices section, it is evident that the HIP categories selected will bolster student learning outcomes overall and provide meaningful feedback to faculty and staff in assessing student learning and overall program objectives with diversity and global learning, writing-intensive courses, and the capstone courses/projects. These meaningful touchpoints show the effectiveness to the revisions and adjustments made since the previous SLOA.

Reviewer Names: