

## Program Assessment: *Annual Report*

<b>Program(s):</b>	<b>Doctoral, Master's, Undergraduate (Minor)</b>
<b>Department:</b>	<b>Philosophy</b>
<b>College/School:</b>	<b>Arts &amp; Sciences</b>
<b>Date:</b>	<b>June 27, 2018</b>
<b>Primary Assessment Contact:</b>	<b>Scott Ragland, Chair</b>

1. Which program student learning outcomes were assessed in this annual assessment cycle?

Doctoral:

1. Student assesses relevant literature or scholarly contributions in philosophy.
2. Student applies the major practices, theories, or research methodologies in philosophy.
3. Student applies knowledge from the field of study to address problems in broader contexts.
4. Student articulates arguments or explanations to a disciplinary or professional audience in both oral and written forms.
5. Student evidences scholarly and/or professional integrity in the field of study

Master's:

1. Student analyzes and defends a philosophical position on a philosophical problem.
2. Student gathers sources relevant to a philosophical problem.
3. Student interprets sources relevant to a philosophical problem.
4. Student synthesizes sources relevant to a philosophical problem.

Undergraduate Minor

1. Student articulates a philosophical argument
  - a. Student clearly and accurately presents premises of the argument
  - b. Student clearly and accurately presents the logical structure of the argument
2. Student evaluates a philosophical argument
  - a. Student raises at least one cogent objection to the argument
  - b. Student presents at least one possible reply to the objection
  - c. Student makes own assessment of the argument clear

2. What data/artifacts of student learning were collected for each assessed outcome? Were Madrid student artifacts included?

No Madrid student artifacts were included for any program. Madrid has no graduate students; please

advise on future need to coordinate with Madrid on phil minor.

For PHD, the artifacts were the written dissertation and oral defense of the dissertation.

For MA, the artifact was a paper written by the student in the final year of graduate coursework.

For the undergraduate minor, the artifact was a paper or essay exam answer completed for a class during the semester in which the student completed the philosophy minor.

3. How did you analyze the assessment data? What was the process? Who was involved?

**NOTE: If you used rubrics as part of your analysis, please include them in an appendix.**

For the PHD, members of each student's dissertation committee scored the dissertation and oral defense against the "dissertation rubric." Results were reported via google forms to the department chair/OA coordinator, who compiled the data and wrote this report.

For the MA, the department chair/OA coordinator scored the student artifacts against the "Master's Thesis" rubric (see further explanation below in section six).

For the undergraduate minor, each instructor applied the "philosophy minor rubric" to the relevant student artifact. Results were reported via google forms to the department chair/OA coordinator, who compiled the data and wrote this report.

4. What did you learn from the data? Summarize the major findings of your analysis for each assessed outcome.

**NOTE: If necessary, include any tables, charts, or graphs in an appendix.**

PHD: 27 faculty responses were received for 8 students (remember there are potentially as many as 4 evaluators for the work of some students). Here are the percentages of faculty responses to each statement on the survey regarding each learning outcome:

1. Student assess relevant literature (here only 20 responses received; technical survey problem?):

Meets Expectations: 25%

Exceeds Expectations: 77%

2. Student applies the major practices . . .

Meets Expectations: 59%

Exceeds Expectations: 41%

3. Student applies knowledge from the field(s) of study to address problems in broader contexts

Meets Expectations: 48%

Exceeds Expectations: 44%

Fails to Meet Expectations: 8%

4. Student articulates arguments . . .

Meets Expectations: 56%

Exceeds Expectations: 41%

Fails to Meet Expectations: 3%

5. Student evidences scholarly and/or professional integrity . . .

Meets Expectations: 44%

Exceeds Expectations: 56%

MA: Three artifacts were collected, one for each of the students receiving an MA this year. All three students met expectations on all four of the learning outcomes in the rubric, though one student was barely in the “meets expectations” range on one of the dimensions of the first outcome.

Minor: We were able to identify 6 minors who completed their minor coursework this year (one in the fall term and five in the spring). One of these students was taught by a professor who responded that no assignments were given in the course to which the rubric would apply. The remaining five student assignments were scored against the rubric by professors, with the following results:

**Student clearly and accurately presents premises of the argument: (Average=3)**

Emerging (1pt):

Developing (2pts): 1 student (20%)

Proficient (3pts): 3 students (60%)

Excellent (4pts): 1 student (20%)

**Student clearly and accurately presents the logical structure of the argument: (Average=2.8)**

Emerging (1pt): 1 student (20%)

Developing (2pts)

Proficient (3pts): 3 students (60%)

Excellent (4pts): 1 student (20%)

**Student raises at least one cogent objection to the argument: (Average=2.8)**

Emerging (1pt): 1 student (20%)

Developing (2pts)

Proficient (3pts): 2 students (40%)

Excellent (4pts): 2 student (40%)

**Student presents at least one possible reply to the objection: (Average=3)**

Emerging (1pt): 1 student (20%)

Developing (2pts)

Proficient (3pts): 1 students (20%)

Excellent (4pts): 3 students (60%)

**Student makes own assessment of the argument clear: (Average=3)**

Emerging (1pt): 1 student (20%)

Developing (2pts)

Proficient (3pts): 2 students (40%)

Excellent (4pts): 2 student (40%)

NB: The student receiving 1 point on the “objection” and “reply” outcomes actually did not raise any objections at all, and so should have received zero points for those outcomes. However, the survey tool did not have an option for zero points, and so should be revised. The averages computed for this report were based on assigning zero points to that student.

5. How did your analysis inform meaningful change? How did you *use the analyzed data to make or implement recommendations for change* in pedagogy, curriculum design, or your assessment plan?

PHD: We consider over 90% meeting or exceeding expectations to be a satisfactory result for the program. This was the case for all outcomes. At this point, no changes appear to be needed.

MA: Given the small sample size and the satisfactory level of student achievement exhibited in the artifacts, it would be premature to make changes in the pedagogy or curriculum of the MA program at this time. However, by actually engaging in MA assessment for the first time (see section six below), we determined that the assessment procedure should be revised. The first learning outcome (“Students will analyze and defend a philosophical position on a philosophical problem”) as currently expressed on the rubric is “triple barreled.” One of the three elements (“Student clearly articulates a philosophical problem”) largely overlaps with current outcome #4 (Thesis presents an accurate, unified snapshot . . . etc.), so we believe that this element should be removed. The other two elements (concerned with (1) articulating a thesis relative to the problem, and (2) defending that thesis against potential criticism) should be broken out on their own as independent learning outcomes. This will facilitate a more fine-grained analysis of results and allow for more effective modification of pedagogy/curriculum going forward. Please see “updated plans” for a copy of the revised Master’s Rubric.

Minor: We were hoping that on average, students would be proficient in all the skills. We did not see this result on two of the skills (presenting logical structure and raising an objection). However, the sample size is too small to be very confident about these results, especially since the numbers were pulled down by one student. It should be noted: that student’s professor originally responded that the course did not involve an assignment working the rubric skills, but then later submitted the student artifact for assessment. One plausible explanation for the student’s low scores is that the student was simply not prompted to consider objections. This raises a question: if two of the six students in this year’s minor assessment pool were not given assignments that worked the skills in the rubric, to what extent is our curriculum aligned with our stated outcomes? In 2018-19 the department chair will be charging the undergraduate committee to study this alignment question. Sufficient lack of alignment, if discovered, would warrant conversation about what needs to change: the curriculum or the outcomes?

NB: the rubric will also be revised to include a “zero points” option for each outcome. See attached below.

6. Did you follow up (“close the loop”) on past assessment work? If so, what did you learn? (*For example, has that curriculum change you made two years ago manifested in improved student learning today, as evidenced in your recent assessment data and analysis?*)

PHD: Due to past problems getting faculty cooperation, we changed to a google-form based system this year, and got much better participation from faculty.

MA Program: Past attempts to assess this program were frustrated by an unclear program structure. Many of those receiving the degree were Jesuits in Philosophy and Letters and were covered by their assessment program, but some were not. These non-Jesuits were mostly advanced Philosophy PhD students dropping out from the program or seeking to teach at state universities (where an MA is required). There was no clear set of learning outcomes motivating the MA program. We followed up on these past frustrated assessment efforts by revising the MA program structure to make the program assessable.

In order to make the MA program capable of being assessed, we redesigned the entire program to involve coursework only, with thesis hours as a coursework options for students wishing to write a thesis. This structure will work well for all philosophy students, including Jesuits. Learning outcomes were identified that are skills exercised repeatedly in philosophy seminar coursework, including thesis hours if those are selected. It was decided that artifacts from the final semester would best allow measurement of the extent to which students have mastered these skills. Assessment went forward this year on that basis as described above. This is a clear case in which assessment efforts drove program changes.

Minor: this was the first time the Philosophy Minor has been assessed.

***IMPORTANT: Please submit any revised/updated assessment plans to the University Assessment Coordinator along with this report.***

**REVISED RUBRICS:**

**M.A. Rubric (may be applied to a graduate term paper or M.A. thesis)**

Learning Outcome	Fails to Meet Expectations	Meets Expectations	Exceeds Expectations
1. Students will gather sources relevant to a philosophical problem.	Student fails to include necessary sources for the topic or includes irrelevant sources.	Student includes all and only relevant primary and secondary sources, and accurately interprets those writings. The student's paper is a good snapshot of the current state of discussion.	Student includes groundbreaking research into primary sources or synthesizes information in novel ways that advance the current discussion of the topic.
2. Students will interpret sources relevant to that philosophical problem.	Student significantly misinterprets sources	Student's interpretation of sources is accurate and plausible on all significant points.	Student offers a compelling interpretation of sources that is novel or groundbreaking in some way.
3. Students will synthesize sources relevant to that philosophical problem.	Student's synthesis misrepresents the current state of the debate on the topic or fails to adequately connect to the student's defense of own position.	Thesis presents an accurate, unified snapshot of the current state of discussion about a philosophical problem in a way that motivates the student's own argument.	Thesis portrays the current state of discussion in a way that is not only accurate and unified, but also novel—opening up new possibilities for research or argument. The student's own position draws on this portrayal.
4. Students will argue for a philosophical thesis pertaining to that philosophical problem.	Student's thesis is not sufficiently clear, or is not sufficiently related to the focal philosophical problem.	Student articulates and argues for a thesis related to the focal philosophical problem.	Student's thesis or argument is sufficiently original, innovative or excellent as to constitute a publishable contribution to existing literature on the subject.
5. Students will defend their thesis.	Student fails to consider or respond to relevant criticisms, or offers only a superficial or facile response.	Student considers relevant objections and provides rigorous responses.	Student's responses to objections are unusually insightful or novel.

**Minor Rubric:**

Outcome	Not Evidenced (0pts)	Emerging (1pt)	Developing (2pts)	Proficient (3pts)	Excellent (4pts)
Student clearly and/or accurately presents premises of the argument.	No argument is discernible in the student artifact.	Student presents the argument's conclusion and at least one key premise. Some statements are precise.	Student presents conclusion and all obvious premises. Student leaves some premises suppressed. Most statements are precise	Student presents conclusion and all obvious premises. Student leaves some premises suppressed. All statements are precise	Student presents conclusion and all premises, including suppressed ones.  All statements are very precise
Student clearly and/or accurately presents the logical structure of the argument.	The student does not address logical structure at all.	Student distinguishes the conclusion from the premises.	In addition, student identifies all relevant logical connectors in the main argument.	Student identifies all relevant logical connectors in both main argument and subarguments.	Student makes the complete argument (including subarguments) fully perspicuous.
Student raises at least one cogent objection to the argument.	No objection is discernible in the student artifact.	Student gestures at an objection.	An objection is clear, but not how it challenges the argument (e.g. which premise is called into question)	Student states a precise objection and makes it clear how the objection challenges the argument (e.g. which premise is called into question)	The student's objection is among the strongest available or is presented in a remarkably salient way.
Student presents at least one possible reply to the objection	No reply is considered to an objection.	Student gestures at a reply.	Student states a precise reply, but does not make it clear how it engages the objection	Student states a precise reply and shows how it engages the objection	The student's reply is among the strongest available or is presented in a remarkably salient way.
Student makes own assessment of the argument clear	The student's position cannot be discerned from the artifact.	Student's assessment is not clearly articulated or is somewhat opposed by the dialectic of the student's writing.	Student clearly articulates own assessment, but it may not be fully supported by the dialectic of the student's writing.	Student clearly articulates own assessment, which is fully supported by the dialectic of the student's writing.	Student's assessment is not only proficient, but is presented in a way that renders it unusually salient.

**OA plan for 2018-19:**

PHD: Continue to gather Dissertation Rubric feedback for use in 20-21 assessment of capstone outcomes, but the focus for 18/19 will be on assessing graduate student teaching (our other main set of learning outcomes)

MA: Continue assessment in the same way as this year.

Undergraduate Program:

Return to assessing Major, specifically:

*1. Students will synthesize knowledge of two different periods of Western philosophy*

**Assessment Methods: Exam question in Phil 460 and rubric.**