Effective Fall 2016

UMBC Department of Philosophy
Assessment Plan

Mission

The Department of Philosophy is committed to the implementation and maintenance of a system of evaluation that will provide an effective framework for faculty to make informed judgments about the strength and direction of the Bachelor of Arts program in Philosophy. The Department of Philosophy's goals and student learning outcomes are explicitly linked to the University's General Education Functional Competencies, highlighting specifically Oral and Written Communication and Critical Analysis and Reasoning (see Goals 2, 3, and 4).

The steps outlined below seek to provide a coherent process for assessment of student performance in achieving the Department of Philosophy's learning outcomes to ensure continued improvement of instructional efforts and innovation in instruction processes.

Educational Goals for Philosophy Majors

1. **Philosophical Content**: Graduates should be familiar with the central concepts, questions, and historical figures of the Western philosophical tradition.
2. **Critical Analysis and Reasoning**: Graduates should be able to identify premises and conclusions of arguments, be able to critically analyze arguments, be able to consider alternative views, and be able to develop and defend their own views.
3. **Logical Reasoning**: Graduates should be able to apply formal techniques of reasoning.
4. **Written and Oral Communication**: Graduates should be able to write clear, well-organized, thorough, and succinct essays and be able to express philosophical concepts and arguments clearly in discussion.

Student Learning Outcomes for Philosophy Majors

1. **Philosophical Content**: Students completing a BA in Philosophy will display a familiarity with the central concepts, questions, and historical figures of the Western philosophical tradition.
2. **Critical Analysis and Reasoning**: Students completing a BA in Philosophy will display the ability to identify premises and conclusions of arguments, the ability to critically analyze arguments, the ability to consider alternative views, and the ability to develop and defend their own views.
3. **Logical Reasoning**: Students completing a BA in Philosophy will display the ability to apply formal techniques of reasoning.
4. **Written and Oral Communication**: Students completing a BA in Philosophy will display the ability to write clear, well-organized, thorough, and succinct

essays and the ability to express philosophical concepts and arguments clearly in discussion.

Procedures

Assessment will be overseen by the Chair of the Assessment Committee, who will serve as the department's Assessment Coordinator. In line with the revised assessment procedures of the College of Arts, Humanities, and Social Sciences, the Department of Philosophy will follow a two-year schedule for its program assessment. In the fall of the first year, the Assessment Coordinator, in consultation with the Assessment Committee, will develop and submit to the College an assessment plan for the year. The plan will focus on a specific learning objective and will utilize direct measures in an attempt to address particular issues and answer actionable questions of relevance to the department's curriculum planning and assessment. The assessment will be carried out in the spring of the first year, with a report of the assessment results to be completed by the Assessment Coordinator, in consultation with the Assessment Committee, no later than July 1. The report will include the results of the assessment, will highlight areas that need strengthening, and will include recommendations based on the assessment results. In the second year, the department will discuss the findings and recommendations and develop a plan to implement changes, if needed. The plan will be submitted to the College in the spring of the second year. Any changes instituted as a result of a biennial assessment cycle should be the focus of the following assessment period to determine the effectiveness of those changes in enhancing student learning outcomes.