

Ph.D. in Philosophy Academic Assessment Plan

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College of Liberal Arts and Sciences
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Office of the Provost

*University of
Florida*

*Institutional
Assessment*

*Continuous Quality
Enhancement*

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Academic Assessment Plan for Ph.D. in Philosophy

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

A. Mission

The mission of the University of Florida encompasses three goals:

- Teaching—undergraduate and graduate through the doctorate—is the fundamental purpose of the university.
- Research and scholarship are integral to the education process and to expanding humankind's understanding of the natural world, the mind and the senses.
- Service is the university's obligation to share the benefits of its knowledge for the public good.

(<http://catalog.ufl.edu/ugrad/current/uf-mission/Pages/home.aspx>)

UF's College of Liberal Arts and Sciences (<http://www.clas.ufl.edu/about/index.html>) describes its "principal mission" as "to lead the academic quest to understand our place in the universe, and to help shape our society and environment" and adds that "[t]hrough teaching, research and service, the College continually expands our knowledge and practice in the most fundamental questions in the arts, humanities, social sciences, and natural and mathematical sciences."

The UF Department of Philosophy supports these missions through teaching, research and service designed to pursue fundamental questions that arise in many different fields, especially those pursued in CLAS.

The Department pursues the fundamental mission of education by providing courses and programs at every level. It provides service to the larger university community in offering both lower-level and more advanced courses that help provide a broad-based liberal arts education to students across the university; it offers both a major leading to a Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy and a minor degree popular among UF students; and it offers advanced graduate courses leading to both a Master of Arts and a Doctorate in Philosophy.

The faculty of the Department of Philosophy are highly engaged in research activities, advancing the state of inquiry into fundamental questions of a conceptual, epistemological, and ethical character; they participate frequently in national and international venues, often publish with leading academic presses and in influential professional journals, and serve the discipline at large through contributing time to the important practice of refereeing and reviewing for publishers.

The Department also aims to serve the broader community via exposing the benefits of clear and critical thinking about matters of value, knowledge and other slippery matters by doing such things as creating and participating in public events at which philosophical questions are discussed by diverse audiences.

B. Student Learning Outcomes and Assessment Measures

SLO Type	SLO	Assessment Method
Knowledge	1. Acquire specialist knowledge of one or more recognized major subfields in philosophy, understood to include the following areas, divided into the three broad categories of history, theoretical philosophy, and matters of value: history (ancient, medieval, modern, 19th century, 20th century); theoretical (metaphysics, epistemology, philosophy of science, philosophy of mind, philosophy of language); value (normative ethics, metaethics, aesthetics, political).	Satisfactory completion and successful public defense of a dissertation.
Skills	2. Pursue an original and sustained line of philosophical research that results in a contribution to the body of philosophical knowledge.	Satisfactory completion and successful public defense of a dissertation.
Skills	3. Produce original research and prepare it in a way that makes it adequate for presentation at a professional conference.	Sample conference-ready paper submitted at the time of the dissertation defense and assessed by the Graduate Committee as either <i>unsatisfactory</i> , <i>satisfactory</i> , <i>good</i> , or <i>outstanding</i> .
Professional Behavior	4. Design, teach, and manage an undergraduate course in philosophy entirely on one's own.	Supervisor assessment of teaching of independent course, for each semester student has such an assignment, using Departmental TA Assessment Form and assessed as either <i>unsatisfactory</i> , <i>satisfactory</i> , <i>good</i> , or <i>outstanding</i> .
Professional Behavior	5. Participate in such professional activities as (i) publishing in a professional journal; (ii) presenting work at a conference; (iii) commenting on someone else's work at a conference; (iv) refereeing submissions for a professional conference; (v) helping with the organization of a conference, including referee work, invitations for speakers, and the like.	Graduate Coordinator collects once a year information from students on all such activities and maintains ongoing records of such.

C. Research

Doctoral students are expected to produce original research of publishable quality. The degree requirements include taking at least six 6000-level advanced seminars. Such seminars require independent research and culminate in a substantial paper that should emulate published papers in philosophy.

Each graduate student in the Department, including both M.A. and Ph.D. students, is assigned an advisor at the start of his or her arrival at UF. If an MA student is admitted to the PhD program, that advisor continues to serve in that capacity until a dissertation director is assigned. Incoming PhD students are assigned advisors that work with the student until such a director is assigned.

All students must take the Graduate Proseminar (PHI5935) which ensures students are familiar with basic research tools (including electronic databases). If a student was in the M.A. program at UF, they will have already taken this course; if a student is an incoming Ph.D. student, he or she will then have to take that course in the first fall semester of enrollment.

Doctoral students are required to take a Doctoral Research and Professional Activities Seminar once each year as part of an ongoing effort to ensure that students make timely progress, are provided regular support from faculty and peers, and are given advice on how to proceed with their work. Students present their work, give feedback on others' work, and share strategies for getting past obstacles, balancing research and TA duties, and other challenges endemic to dissertation work. Discussions include sharing information on conference and publication opportunities.

Finally, the graduate student population organizes its own annual graduate student conference; students here serve as critical commentators on papers presented at the conference. Students are encouraged to submit papers to professional venues, including both state and national conferences. Co-authored papers with faculty are not unusual, and the Department is committed to funding student travel to conferences to present their own work.

D. Assessment Timeline

Program: Ph.D. in Philosophy

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Assessment	Assessment	Time of assessment
SLOs		
Knowledge		
#1	Dissertation and Public Defense	Completion of degree
Skills		
#2	Dissertation and Public Defense	Completion of degree
#3	Sample Conference-Ready Paper	Completion of degree
Professional Behavior		
#4	Supervisor Assessment of Independently Taught Course using Departmental Rubric and TA Evaluation Form (see Appendix)	End of each semester student teaches his or her own course (Each student must teach his or her own course at least once in the program and will often do so several times.)
#5	Graduate Coordinator Collection of Data Re Professional Activities	Annual collection of data at end of spring term

E. Assessment Cycle

Assessment Cycle for:
Program: Ph.D. in Philosophy

College of Liberal Arts and Sciences

Analysis and Interpretation:
 Program Modifications:
 Dissemination:

August-November
 Completed by December
 Completed by January

SLOs	Year	10-11	11-12	12-13	13-14	14-15	15-16
Content Knowledge							
#1				X	X	X	X
Skills							
#2				X	X	X	X
#3				X	X	X	X
Professional Behavior							
#4				X	X	X	X
#5				X	X	X	X

F. Measurement Tools

The doctoral dissertation and its public defense make up the central means of assessing Ph.D. students for their having gained the specialist knowledge and expert-level skill needed to earn the degree and be counted as scholars of the field. The first two SLOs describe those central tasks and are assessed by the dissertation and its defense.

The skills involved in shorter projects are also crucial; the third SLO describes such skills in terms of the ability to produce work suitable for presentation at a conference of academics. To assess this skill, the department requests that each doctoral candidate provide at the time of completion a distinct paper that is suitable for such presentation. This paper may or may not be a part of the dissertation. The papers are collected and assessed by the Graduate Committee as either *unsatisfactory*, *satisfactory*, *good*, or *outstanding*.

Designing, teaching and managing an undergraduate course in philosophy is one of the central professional activities in the discipline. This fourth SLO is assessed by means of a Departmental TA Assessment form. Each doctoral student is required to teach his or her own course at least once prior to receiving the PhD. On each such occasion, an assigned supervisor (either the Department Chair or his assigned representative) consults with the student in the design of the course, evaluates its syllabus and general design, and observes the student as a teacher. The student's performance is then evaluated as either *unsatisfactory*, *satisfactory*, *good*, or *outstanding*. The Graduate Coordinator maintains copies of all such evaluations for review and data analysis.

Finally, the last SLO focuses on a variety of related professional activities, including (i) publishing in a professional journal; (ii) presenting work at a conference; (iii) commenting on someone else's work at a conference; (iv) helping with the organization of a conference. Each

graduate student in the program (including M.A. students) is required to report to the Graduate Coordinator at the end of the spring term on his or her activities, noting details about each activity that falls into one of these categories. The Graduate Coordinator maintains copies of all such reports for review and data analysis.

G. Assessment Oversight

Name	Department Affiliation	Email Address	Phone Number
Gene Witmer (Chair)	Philosophy	gwitmer@ufl.edu	273-1830
Chuang Liu (Graduate Coordinator)	Philosophy	logics@ufl.edu	273-1811

Appendix A. Supervisor TA Assessment Form – Ph.D. in Philosophy

The assessment here provided is meant to measure SLO #4 (Professional Behavior): Design, teach, and manage an undergraduate course in philosophy entirely on one's own.

Department of Philosophy
Teaching Assistant Evaluation Form
For Graduate Student Instructors

Directions: To be used whenever a graduate student has an assignment as a Teaching Assistant that requires him or her to act as the primary instructor of the course. In such case, the Supervisor of the TA is the Department Chair or his or her designee.

At some point during the semester, the Supervisor shall gather the TA's syllabus for the course and observe his or her teaching at least once. Following the observation, he or she shall complete this form and provide a copy to (i) the TA; (ii) the Graduate Coordinator; and (iii) office staff who shall place it in the TA's file.

Teaching Assistant	
Semester/Year	
Course & section(s)	
Number of students in section(s)	
Date(s) of observation(s)	

The Supervisor shall assess the Graduate Instructor's performance as either Unsatisfactory, Satisfactory, Good, or Outstanding using the rubric on the reverse side. Each listed condition is necessary for being counted as belonging to the category at the head of the column. If there is at least one condition in the "satisfactory" column that is not met in the judgement of the Supervisor, the TA's performance is Unsatisfactory. The Supervisor may, at his or her discretion, conduct multiple observations to determine the TA's performance as reported on this form.

Supervisor's assessment	
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Rubric for assessing Graduate Student Instructors

<i>Factor/Assessment</i>	<i>Outstanding</i>	<i>Good</i>	<i>Satisfactory</i>
<i>Syllabus</i>			<p>1. The syllabus includes most if not all of the elements required by UF's syllabus policy, found here: http://www.clas.ufl.edu/curriculum/forms/UF_policy_course_syllabi.pdf.</p>
<i>Course content</i>		<p>1. Assignments make it possible for the instructor to provide useful feedback to students.</p>	<p>1. The content fits within the broad parameters set by the course's catalog description.</p> <p>2. The level of difficulty of readings is appropriate to the course level (2000, 3000, etc.).</p> <p>3. Assignments are challenging but realistic for the course level.</p>
<i>Classroom performance : preparation</i>	<p>1. The instructor demonstrates exceptional facility in one or more of the following:</p>		<p>1. The instructor has a plan for the class session(s) observed.</p> <p>2. The instructor shows a solid understanding of the material presented.</p> <p>3. Questions from students are answered in a way that either provides a clear answer or at least helps the student see the significance of the question.</p>
<i>Classroom performance : communication</i>	<p>helpful responses to student questions and comments, stimulating</p>	<p>1. The instructor ensures clear communication with students by frequent interaction, insofar as class size allows.</p>	<p>1. The presentation avoids obscurity.</p> <p>2. Difficult ideas are not unduly simplified.</p> <p>3. The instructor uses an appropriate mix of examples and official formulations (of either theses or arguments) to clarify ideas.</p>
<i>Classroom</i>	<p>questions or</p>	<p>1. The instructor</p>	<p>1. The instructor is attentive to</p>

<p><i>performance : interaction</i></p>	<p><i>exercises that drive the content of a class discussion, or presentatio ns that prompt exceptionall y good contribution s from students.</i></p>	<p><i>works to involve a wide variety of students, including those otherwise reticent to speak up, insofar as class size allows.</i></p>	<p><i>students' level of engagement and acts to maintain their engagement by asking questions as appropriate. 2. The instructor is respectful to students in both questions and answers while working to maintain control over the discussion.</i></p>
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