



## Annual Report on Program Learning Outcomes Assessment

**Program:** BA in Philosophy (with correlate joint majors)

**Program Contact and Title:** Prof. Allen Speight, Chair

**College/School Contact and Title:** CAS Dean's Office

**Date:** *This form is due to annually by November 15 to the Provost's Office at buassess@bu.edu.*

### 1. List the learning outcomes for the program:

- 1. Demonstrate the conceptual ability and the communication skills needed for intensive examination of questions concerning what is true, what is good and what is beautiful.
- 2. Demonstrate familiarity with core questions in the main branches of philosophical inquiry (ethics and political philosophy, metaphysics and epistemology, logic) and sustain critical reflection on, and discussion of, those questions..
- 3. Demonstrate acquaintance with the canonical works of both antiquity and modernity, as well as the basic issues and texts of contemporary philosophy.
- 4. Defend their own views with strong arguments, but also remain open to disagreement and critique.
- 5. Display curiosity about, and interest and engagement in, the world in which they live.

### 2. Where are these outcomes published?

*All outcomes are published on the Program Learning Outcomes Assessment website. We recommend that you publish your outcomes on your website as well; please provide that URL*  
Our outcomes will be published on the departmental website: <http://www.bu.edu/phil/>.

### 3. How do you determine whether learning outcomes have been achieved?

#### a. What evidence do/will you gather?

The department will review a randomly chosen, representative sample of final papers drawn from selected 400-level courses each year; work from students in joint majors hosted by the department will be included, as appropriate, in the relevant samples of material collected each year from the group of general majors.

#### i. What evidence do you currently have available to begin assessment, or what do you currently use?

See below.

#### ii. What tools might you like to implement and/or what materials would you like to gather in the future to improve program assessment?

See below.

#### b. Who interprets the evidence?

Annually by a faculty assessment committee.

### 4. Please list the dates of the most recent program reviews and indicate other venues in which you've discussed program learning outcomes:



- a. **External accreditation review, if applicable:**  
N/A
  - b. **Internal (department, school/college, or overseer), if applicable:**  
Department has completed a Strategic Plan in 2010 and again in 2014.
  - c. **Internal (Provost's academic program review, a.k.a. APR):**  
Department undergoing APR in AY 2015-16 (with site visit scheduled for April 2016).
  - d. **Other discussions**
5. **Have you made curricular changes as a result of the information gleaned? If so, what?**  
N/A
6. **All programs must have assessed all outcomes and acted upon their assessments by May 2017. Please project a schedule, by year, for an annual cycle of assessment for your program.**  
May-November 2015: The Department assessed student ability to offer clear analysis of relevant philosophical concepts and to present strong arguments for their views (criteria #1 and #4 above), as evidenced in sampled senior papers. The faculty assessment committee identified two key skill components related to these criteria in which students could improve--clearer statements of a paper's argument and more developed responses to potential objections. Since both of these elements could be improved by requiring students to revise and resubmit papers, select senior seminars in the coming year will adopt on a trial basis a paper revision policy requiring resubmission of papers after either student peer or faculty review/comment.  
May-November 2016: The Department will review papers from the seminars using the trial revision policy and also examine papers with an eye to criteria #2-3 and #5. On the latter criteria, we are also considering the parallel use of an indirect assessment method (an alumni questionnaire).