

# Learning Outcomes for Philosophy Undergraduate Programs

*Approved at Philosophy Department Meeting, December 4, 2014*

*(Incomplete; see notations in section 1)*

## 1. Background

The University of Guelph prides itself on the quality of its learning environment and is a leader in outcomes-based pedagogy. In accordance with the Ontario Council of Academic Vice-Presidents' Quality Assurance Framework (2010), in 2012 the University Senate endorsed a set of "[Learning Outcomes for the Undergraduate Degree](#)." They enjoined programs to formulate their own more specific outcomes, producing a "[Guide to Developing and Assessing Learning Outcomes](#)." In this document we formulate outcomes specific to the:

- Philosophy Major (Honours Program)
- Philosophy Minor (Honours Program) [*not yet done*]
- Philosophy Area of Concentration (General Program) [*not yet done*]
- Ethics in the Life Sciences Minor (Honours Program) [*this program is being cancelled*]

## 2. Preparation

An outcomes-based approach to pedagogy helps to organize and enhance student learning while providing a foundation for an integrated education and a framework for structuring curricula. Learning Outcomes are clear and direct statements that describe the *competences* as well as the *essential* and *enduring* disciplinary knowledge and abilities that students should possess upon completion of a program or a course. Learning Outcomes focus on transferable knowledge, skills and behaviors that can be observed and assessed. The Department of Philosophy Learning Outcomes align with the University of Guelph Learning Outcomes for the Undergraduate Degree:

- **Critical and Creative Thinking**  
Inquiry and Analysis; Problem Solving; Creativity; Depth and Breadth of Understanding
- **Literacy**  
Information Literacy; Quantitative Literacy; Technological Literacy; Visual Literacy
- **Global Understanding**  
Global Understanding; Sense of Historical Development; Civic Knowledge and Engagement; Intercultural Competence
- **Communicating**  
Oral Communication; Written Communication; Reading Comprehension; Integrative Communication

- **Professional and Ethical Behavior**

Teamwork; Ethical Reasoning; Leadership; Personal Organization and Time Management

### **3. Results**

#### **3.1. Degree-Program Learning Outcomes**

The Department of Philosophy Learning Outcomes for the Philosophy Major, Philosophy Minor, Philosophy Area of Concentration and Ethics in the Life Sciences Minor explicitly link to degree-level outcomes and reflect institutional and provincially-defined degree level expectations. These Learning Outcomes clearly and concisely answer the questions:

1. How would you describe the attributes of an ideal graduate of the program?
2. What unique strengths should students who complete this program possess?
3. What is essential that students know and be able to do at the end of their learning experiences?
4. What key knowledge, skills, and values/attitudes should students who complete the program possess?

#### **3.2. Course-Specific Learning Outcomes**

The Department of Philosophy Course-Specific Learning Outcomes explicitly link to philosophy course syllabi and fall within the parameters outlined in the Degree-Program Learning Outcomes. Course-Specific Learning Outcomes clearly define and integrate outcomes that can:

- Help to organize, structure and enhance student learning.
- Improve communication with students and other instructors regarding the important concepts and skills covered in a course.
- Improve assessment practices.

#### **3.3. Introduce, Reinforce and Master**

The Department of Philosophy Learning Outcomes capture the knowledge, skills and behaviors that students in our programs will possess when they graduate. The emphasis on particular outcomes varies by course, and a student's mastery of outcomes is on a continuum—*introduce*, *reinforce* and *master*—that follows her trajectory through a program.