

UNDERGRADUATE LEARNING & TEACHING

Forward Thinking project

This Report forms part of a series of summary reports on philosophy in Australian Universities produced as part of the *Forward Thinking: Learning and Teaching Philosophy in Australian Universities* Project. This series consists of reports on:

- The Significance of the Discipline of Philosophy;
- Philosophy in Australian Universities;
- Undergraduate Learning and Teaching;
- Honours Learning and Teaching;
- Postgraduate Learning and Teaching; and
- Staff Learning and Teaching.

These reports are available on the Forward Thinking Project website:

<http://aap.org.au/forwardthinking/reports/index.html>.

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About this Report

This Report is divided into 6 sections: Undergraduate Profile, including: student load and enrolments in philosophy; degree profile and completions; Student Profile, including: enrolment status, gender, age and domestic/overseas characteristics; Student Experience, including evaluation of course and destinations; Program and Curriculum, including: curriculum structure, teaching hours, areas covered by a program, curriculum trends, curriculum mapping and graduate attributes; Teaching issues, including developments and trends, online learning, assessment and evaluation and Distance learning.

Data in these reports is drawn from a number of sources, including: DEEWR, GCA and the AAP. Data was also drawn from a survey of Heads of Philosophy Programs. Those wishing to do further research may refer to the [datasets](#). Access to some data is restricted to project participants and Heads of philosophy programs. Access may be obtained from the [Executive Officer](#) of the Australasian Association of Philosophy. Sections of these reports refer to Case Studies developed from issues raised in the surveys and later discussed at round tables on issues and innovations in teaching and learning philosophy. These cover: assessment, evaluation, graduate attributes and teaching philosophy to non-philosophy majors/BA students. Those wishing to pursue these issues further may refer to the [case studies](#).

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Undergraduate Profile

Student load and enrolments in philosophy

This section on student load and enrolments uses data from the DEEWR higher education statistics student collection; the data was prepared by DEEWR for the AAP. DEEWR reports data from all Higher Education Providers that code units to Higher Education Discipline Groups philosophy (091701). Units of study are coded to the classification without regard to the type of Academic Organisational Unit (AOU) responsible for the unit of study being coded¹, and as such, do not reflect the load of a philosophy department or school. (For further information see the section on limitations on the data in the [Final Project Report](#)). For a list of institutions that report load in philosophy units see Appendix 1.

In summary, this section shows that there has been growth of about 10 per cent in philosophy enrolments in the period since 2000, but relatively little growth in the number of students completing a philosophy major. The majority of students who enrol in a philosophy unit at Undergraduate level only take one or two philosophy units as an undergraduate. Most of these students are enrolled in BA areas of studies (Society and Culture or Creative Arts), but a large proportion come from Management and Commerce, Natural and Physical Sciences, and Education and Health. Therefore, one important role of philosophy teaching is to ensure that students who enrol in introductory philosophy gain the benefits of philosophical study from that brief encounter. Those students who take a unit at second or third year in philosophy appear to take philosophy to complement another major sequence of study (history, sociology, politics, law, etc). Again, this suggests that there could be benefit in designing philosophy curricula in light of the curricula of related disciplines to make the links between the areas more visible and attractive.

Total Undergraduate load

The following table shows total Undergraduate load in philosophy units by course type in 2008 for all Fields Of Education (FOE) and all institutions.

¹ DEEWR gives the following example: 'For example, in the one institution, a "mathematics for engineers" unit might be taught by an Engineering AOU and a "pure mathematics" unit by a Science AOU. Both units could be coded to the detailed fields of education 010101 (Mathematics). Were the "mathematics for engineers" unit to be taught by the Science AOU, or the "pure mathematics" unit by the Engineering AOU, both units would still be coded to the detailed fields of education 010101.' See, 'Student help file', <http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Publications/HEStatistics/Pages/HEStatisticsCollection.aspx>, accessed 15th January 2010.

Sum of EFTSL		
Level of course	2008	% of total load
Associate Degree	10.63	0.3%
Bachelor	3348.03	97.8%
Other Undergraduate	64.88	1.9%
Grand Total	3423.53	100.0%

Table 1: Total Undergraduate load in philosophy units by course type 2008 (all FOE and all institutions)

Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Summary

Undergraduate enrolments in philosophy units are recorded at Associate Degree, Bachelor and Other Undergraduate award courses. The majority of undergraduate load in philosophy – 98 per cent, is at Bachelor Course level. The following tables provide a more detailed breakdown of load and enrolments in philosophy units at Bachelor course level.

Trends in Undergraduate load

The following table shows total load in philosophy units at Bachelor course level for 2001-8.

Sum total of EFTSL	Year							
Level of course	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Bachelor	3045	3373	3068	3319	3238	3338	3247	3348

Table 2: Total Undergraduate load in philosophy units by course type 2001-8 (all FOE and all institutions).

Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Summary

Enrolments in philosophy units at Bachelor course level have varied within ~300 EFTSL between the years 2001-2008 (by roughly 10 per cent). EFTSL in 2001 was 3045 EFTSL; there has been a 10 per cent increase in overall load, at 3348 EFTSL in 2008.²

Philosophy load at Bachelor level by institution 2008

The following table shows philosophy load at Bachelor course level in 2008 by recording institution in descending order.

² The ALTC/DASSH Scoping the BA project notes ‘there has been a steady increase in the number of students across the broader Arts programs, there has been a steady decline in the number of students engaged in Bachelor of Arts programs’ (Gannaway and Trent 2008, p. 24).

Sum of EFTSL	
Institution	Total
The University of Notre Dame Australia	311.21
Monash University	292.00
The University of New South Wales	193.13
La Trobe University	175.17
The University of Queensland	173.24
The University of Melbourne	162.38
University of Wollongong	162.02
The University of Adelaide	161.54
Macquarie University	161.25
University of Tasmania	151.00
The University of Sydney	133.71
The University of Newcastle	115.13
Deakin University	113.63
Swinburne University of Technology	112.13
Australian Catholic University	108.38
The Flinders University of South Australia	107.50
The University of Western Australia	102.36
The Australian National University	82.75
The University of New England	78.38
Murdoch University	74.96
Victoria University	69.39
Bond University	64.00
University of Western Sydney	56.25
Griffith University	29.09
Charles Sturt University	26.75
University of South Australia	25.38
RMIT University	23.63
University of Technology, Sydney	18.00
University of Ballarat	17.88
Edith Cowan University	15.00
Campion Institute Limited	11.63
Queensland University of Technology	8.88
The Southern School of Natural Therapies Limited	4.72
Central Queensland University	4.38
Tabor College - Victoria	0.75
Charles Darwin University	0.50
Grand Total	3348.03

Table 3: Load at Bachelor course level in philosophy units in 2008 by institution (all FOE)
Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Summary

The table shows a large variation in the size of philosophy load by institution. The mean load is 93.00 EFTSL; the median load is 78.07 EFTSL. Data reported by DEEWR³

³ Units of study are coded to the classification without regard to the type of Academic Organisational Unit (AOU) responsible for the unit of study being coded and as such, do not reflect the load of a philosophy department or school.

shows the University of Notre Dame has the highest load of all institutions at Bachelor level – at 311.21 EFTSL, and Charles Darwin University, the lowest – at 0.5 EFTSL.

Undergraduate enrolments by year level

The following tables show Undergraduate enrolments in philosophy units in 2008 by level of year for all Fields of Education and all institutions and the percentage of enrolments by year level in enrolments in units at the Bachelor Course level in 2008.

Sum of Number of students	Level of course			Grand Total
	Associate Degree	Bachelor	Other Undergraduate	
Level of year				
1st year	51	8615	275	8941
2nd year	9	4775	160	4944
3rd year	3	3149	23	3175
4+ year		3015	9	3024
Grand Total	63	19554	467	20084

Table 4: Enrolments in philosophy units 2008 by year level (all FOE and all institutions)
Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Sum of Number of students		
Level of year	Total	
1st year	8615	44%
2nd year	4775	24%
3rd year	3149	16%
4+ year	3015	15%
Grand Total	19554	

Table 5: Percentage of enrolments by year level in enrolments in units at the Bachelor Course level in 2008
Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Summary

Table 4 shows that enrolments decrease by year level for all courses at undergraduate level. At Bachelor course level, 44 per cent of total philosophy enrolments are in 1st year, 24 per cent in 2nd year, 16 per cent in 3rd year and 15 per cent in 4+ years.⁴

Number of units and year level

The following table shows the number of units enrolled in by year level in 2008.

⁴ Note, the year level indicates the year in the students' enrolment history in which they enrolled in that unit. For example, if I take a 1st year unit in my second year of enrolment, that unit will show up as a 2nd year unit. For this reason also, 4+ years is not an indication of honours years enrolments.

Sum of Number of students										
Unit in year	1 st yr		2 nd yr		3 rd yr		4+ yr		Grand Total	
One philosophy unit in a year	6384	74%	3479	73%	2353	75%	2151	71%	14367	73%
Three or more philosophy units in a year	347	4%	493	10%	358	11%	325	11%	1523	8%
Two philosophy units in a year	1884	22%	803	17%	438	14%	539	18%	3664	19%
Grand Total	8615		4775		3149		3015		19554	

Table 6: Number of units enrolled in by year level in 2008

Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Summary

Study of one philosophy unit a year makes up 73 per cent of enrolments in 2008; study of two units makes up 19 per cent and 3 or more units in a year – 8 per cent.

Study of one philosophy unit makes up 74 per cent of enrolments in 1st year, study of 2 units, 22 per cent and study of three or more units, 4 per cent.

Study of one philosophy unit makes up 73 per cent of enrolments in 2nd year, study of 2 units, 17 per cent and study of three or more units, 10 per cent.

Study of one philosophy unit makes up 75 per cent of enrolments in 3rd year, study of 2 units, 14 per cent and study of three or more units, 11 per cent.

Study of one philosophy unit makes up 71 per cent of enrolments in 4th year, study of 2 units, 18 per cent and study of three or more units, 11 per cent.

The majority of students who enrol in a philosophy unit at Undergraduate level only take one or two philosophy units as an undergraduate.

Enrolment trends by year level 2001 to 2008

The following table shows Philosophy Enrolments at Bachelor course level by level of year 2001-8.

Level of year	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
1st year	7832	9085	7996	8744	8697	9313	8807	8615
2nd year	4276	4523	3651	3900	3935	3974	4166	4775
3rd year	2517	2698	2396	2743	2798	2748	2855	3149
4+ year	2798	2867	2676	3008	3038	2951	2960	3015
Grand Total	17423	19173	16719	18395	18468	18986	18788	19554

Table 7: Bachelor enrolments in philosophy units by year level all FOE and all institutions 2001-2008

Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Summary

Total enrolments from 2001 to 2008 have increased, with increases at all year levels from 2001 to 2008. The largest increase has been at 1st year level – 10 per cent.

Degree profile of philosophy students

The following table gives a breakdown of bachelor level course load and percentage of total load by Field of Education code in 2008.

Sum of EFTSL		
Broad field of education	Total	
Society and Culture	2149	64%
Management and Commerce	262	8%
Creative Arts	249	7%
Natural and Physical Sciences	243	7%
Education	165	5%
Health	155	5%
Engineering and Related Technologies	60	2%
Information Technology	47	1%
Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies	12	0%
Architecture and Building	6	0%
Grand Total	3348	100%

Table 8: in Philosophy load Bachelor level course and percentage of total load by Field of Education code in 2008

Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Summary

Student load in philosophy comes from several fields of education. The majority of load comes from Society and Culture. Most students who enrol in a philosophy unit at Undergraduate level are enrolled in BA areas of studies (Society and Culture or Creative Arts) – 71 per cent, but a significant proportion come from Management and Commerce – 8 per cent, Natural and Physical Sciences – 7 per cent, and Education and Health – 5 per cent respectively.

The following table gives a further breakdown of philosophy load in Bachelor level course in 2008 by field of education by year level.

Sum of Number of students									
Broad field of education	1 st yr		2 nd yr		3 rd yr		4+yr		Grand Total
Society and Culture	5431	63%	2573	54%	1527	48%	1691	56%	11222
Natural and Physical Sciences	638	7%	312	7%	260	8%	280	9%	1490
Management and Commerce	532	6%	639	13%	442	14%	263	9%	1876
Information Technology	132	2%	71	1%	47	1%	69	2%	319
Health	561	7%	338	7%	309	10%	110	4%	1318
Engineering and Related Technologies	77	1%	122	3%	58	2%	167	6%	424
Education	486	6%	308	6%	225	7%	240	8%	1259
Creative Arts	715	8%	381	8%	251	8%	163	5%	1510
Architecture and Building	4	0%	9	0%	15	0%	17	1%	45
Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies	39	0%	22	0%	15	0%	15	0%	91
Grand Total	8615	100%	4775	100%	3149	100%	3015	100%	19554

Table 9: in Philosophy load Bachelor level course and percentage of total load by Field of Education code and year level in 2008

Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Completions in philosophy

The following table shows Bachelor Award Course Completions in philosophy at Bachelor level in 2001-2008.

Sum of Number of student	Year							
Level of course	2001	2002	2003	2004	2005	2006	2007	2008
Bachelor	442	438	460	498	442	434	414	509

Table 10: Completions in philosophy at Bachelor level in 2001-2008

Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Summary

The data from DEEWR in the table above shows the number of Bachelor Award Course completions in philosophy. Whilst there has been growth of about 10 per cent in philosophy load in the period since 2000 (see Table 2), it is difficult to ascertain whether there has been any growth in the number of students completing a philosophy major.

Student Profile

This Student Profile section of the report uses data from the DEEWR higher education statistics student collection; the data was prepared by DEEWR for the AAP. DEEWR reports data from all Higher Education Providers that code units to Higher Education Discipline Groups philosophy (091701). For a list of institutions that report load in philosophy units see Appendix 1. Units of study are coded to the classification without regard to the type of Academic Organisational Unit (AOU) responsible for the unit of study being coded, and as such, do not reflect the load of a philosophy department or school. (For further information see the section on limitations on the data in the [Final Project Report](#)). For a list of institutions that report load in philosophy units see Appendix 1.

In summary, this section shows that among students who have enrolled in a pattern of study that indicates a philosophy major⁵ in the period since 2000, a larger proportion of these are enrolled full time than in the broader Australian undergraduate student body, and while female enrolments in philosophy units significantly outnumber male enrolments, a student who has completed a pattern of study indicating a philosophy major is more likely to be male than female, more likely to be under 29, and more likely to have been born in Australia than the average undergraduate in Australia. There is a small, but significant percentage drawn from Asia, including China, Hong Kong, Singapore and India. Most undergraduate philosophy is taught on an internal basis. Almost half (42 per cent) of external students are enrolled on a part time basis.

Enrolment status

The following table provides a breakdown of bachelor load in philosophy by type of attendance in 2008.

Sum of EFTSL	Type of attendance			
Level of course	Full-time	Part-time	% Full-time	Grand Total
Bachelor	2981.77	366.26	89%	3348.03

Table 11: Bachelor load in philosophy by type of attendance in 2008

Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Summary

The great majority of Bachelor students are enrolled full time – 89 per cent.

⁵ DEEWR data reports how many units a student is enrolled in, but it does not tell us if they are doing a major.

Gender

The following table provides a breakdown of philosophy load in Bachelor courses in 2008 by gender.

Sum of EFTSL			
Level of course	Gender	Total	% of total load
Bachelor	Females	1803	54%
	Males	1545	46%
Bachelor Total		3348	

Table 12: Philosophy load in Bachelor courses in 2008 by gender
Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Summary

In 2008 female students made up 54 per cent of philosophy load at Bachelor course level.

Gender and trends

The following table gives a breakdown of philosophy load in Bachelor courses 2001-8 by Gender.

Sum EFTSL		%		%		%		%		%		%		%		%
	2001		2002		2003		2004		2005		2006		2007		2008	
F	1722	57	1879	56	1700	55	1808	54	1763	54	1822	55	1789	55	1803	54
M	1323	43	1494	44	1368	45	1511	46	1475	46	1516	45	1458	45	1545	46
Total	3045		3373		3068		3319		3238		3338		3247		3348	

Table 13: philosophy load in Bachelor courses 2001-8 by Gender
Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Summary

For the years 2001-2008 total female load in philosophy at Bachelor level has varied within 3 per cent (between 54 in 2004 and 57 per cent in 2001).

Enrolments in philosophy units in the Bachelor Course in 2008 by gender and year level

The following table gives a breakdown of enrolments in philosophy units in Bachelor course level in 2008 by gender and level of year of study.

Sum of Number of students	Gender			
Level of year	Females	% Female	Males	Grand Total
1st year	5196	60%	3419	8615
2nd year	2743	57%	2032	4775
3rd year	1759	56%	1390	3149
4+ year	1541	51%	1474	3015
Grand Total	11239	57%	8315	19554

Table 14: enrolments in philosophy units in Bachelor course level in 2008 by gender and level of year of study

Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Summary

Overall the percentage female enrolment declines by year of study. Female students make up 60 per cent of enrolments at 1st year; 57 per cent in second, 56 per cent in third year and 51 per cent of four years plus study.

Enrolments in philosophy units in the Bachelor Course in 2008 by gender, level of and number of units in a year

The following table gives a further breakdown of Enrolments in philosophy units in the Bachelor Course in 2008 by gender, level of and number of units in a year.

Unit in year	Gender	1st year		2nd year		3rd year		4+ year		Grand Total	
One philosophy unit in a year	Females	3973	62%	2091	60%	1374	58%	1136	53%	8574	60%
	Males	2411	38%	1388	40%	979	42%	1015	47%	5793	40%
One philosophy unit in a year Total		6384		3479		2353		2151		14367	
Three or more philosophy units in a year	Females	153	44%	243	49%	181	51%	139	43%	716	47%
	Males	194	56%	250	51%	177	49%	186	57%	807	53%
Three or more philosophy units in a year Total		347		493		358		325		1523	
Two philosophy units in a year	Females	1070	57%	409	51%	204	47%	266	49%	1949	53%
	Males	814	43%	394	49%	234	53%	273	51%	1715	47%
Two philosophy units in a year Total		1884		803		438		539		3664	
Grand Total		8615		4775		3149		3015		19554	

Table 15: Enrolments in philosophy units in the Bachelor Course in 2008 by gender, level of and number of units in a year

Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Summary

A breakdown of enrolments in philosophy units at the Bachelor Course level in 2008 shows that female enrolments decline by the number of units studied in and a year and by the level of year. Female enrolments in one unit of philosophy in first year make up for 62 per cent of enrolments; in contrast, female enrolments in three or more units in 4+ years make up 43 per cent of enrolments. (Recall, study of one philosophy unit in a year makes up for 73 per cent of enrolments; two units 19 per cent and three or more units 8 per cent.)

Bachelor 2008 BFOE and gender

The following table gives a breakdown of load in philosophy units at Bachelor course level in 2008 by field of education and gender.

Sum of EFTSL	Gender			
Broad field of education	Females	%female	Males	Grand Total
Society and Culture	1162	54%	988	2149
Natural and Physical Sciences	121	50%	122	243
Management and Commerce	124	47%	137	262
Information Technology	7	15%	40	47
Health	100	65%	54	155
Engineering and Related Technologies	9	16%	50	60
Education	118	71%	47	165
Creative Arts	153	61%	96	249
Architecture and Building	3	48%	3	6
Agriculture, Environmental and Related Studies	6	51%	6	12
Grand Total	1803	54%	1545	3348

Table 16: Load in philosophy units at Bachelor course level in 2008 by field of education and gender

Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Summary

The table shows that whilst female students make up 54 per cent of load at Bachelor level, and that 54 per cent of the students enrolled in Society and Culture are female, that the percentage female varies for load from other Broad Fields of Education. For example, 71 per cent of load from Education are female and 65 per cent from Health are female; whilst only 47 per cent of load from Management and Commerce are female and only 16 per cent from Engineering and Related Technologies are female.

Gender and completions

The following table provides a breakdown of completions in philosophy at Bachelor course level by gender 2001-2008

	2001	%	2002	%	2003	%	2004	%	2005	%	2006	%	2007	%	2008	%
Female	230	52	201	46	185	40	218	44	181	41	174	40	203	48	218	43

Table 17: Completions at Bachelor course level in 2008 by field of education, year level and gender

Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Summary

From the table above we see that female completions at Bachelor level in 2008 account for 43 per cent of completions. The female percentage completion varies by 12 percentage points, with 40 per cent in 2006 and 52 per cent in 2001. Note whilst female students account for more than 50 per cent of load/enrolments, completions by female students are less than 50 per cent. This may be because female students do not major in philosophy in the same numbers as male students (either because they never intended to major or because they decide not to major or both) or that they do not complete or finish the major in the same proportions as male students.

Age

The following table provides a breakdown of student load in philosophy units at Undergraduate Course level in 2008 by age group.

Sum of EFTSL		
Age group	Bachelor	% of total load
17	297	9%
18	624	19%
19	578	17%
20	450	14%
21	336	10%
22	232	7%
23	148	4%
24	109	3%
25	74	2%
26	64	2%
27	40	1%
28	33	1%
29	25	1%
16 and under	6	0%
30 to 39	177	5%
40 to 49	95	3%
50 to 59	41	1%
60 and over	17	1%
Grand Total	3348	100%

Table 18: student load in philosophy units at Undergraduate Course level in 2008 by age group.

Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Summary

In 2008 69 per cent of students were aged between 17-21; 90 per cent were aged 29 or under.

Citizenship

Domestic/Overseas load

The following table provides a breakdown of philosophy load in 2008 by citizenship.

Sum of EFTSL		
Citizenship	Bachelor	% of total load
Domestic Students	3105	93%
Overseas Students	243	7%
Grand Total	3348	100%

Table 19: Philosophy load in 2008 by undergraduate course level and citizenship
Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Summary

93 per cent of philosophy student load at undergraduate level in 2008 is made up of domestic students.

Load by domestic/overseas students 2001-2008

The following table provides a breakdown of philosophy load at Bachelor level in 2001-2008 by citizenship.

Sum of EFTSL	2001	%	2002	%	2003	%	2004	%	2005	%	2006	%	2007	%	2008	%
Domestic Bachelor	2892	95	3183	94	2876	94	3079	93	3001	93	3090	93	3028	93	3105	93
Overseas Bachelor	153	5	189	6	191	6	240	7	237	7	248	7	219	7	243	7
Grand Total	3045		3372		3067		3319		3238		3338		3247		3348	

Table 20: Philosophy load in 2001-8 at Bachelor course level by citizenship
Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Summary

There has been an increase in overseas load from 2001-2008, from 5 per cent of total Bachelor load in 2001, to 7 per cent in 2008.

Student load in 2008 by country of birth

The following table provides a breakdown of philosophy load at undergraduate course level in 2008 by country of birth.

Sum of EFTSL			
Country of birth	Bachelor	Grand Total (all UG courses)	% of total load
Australia	2613.38	2633.76	76.9%
China (excludes SARs and Taiwan Province)	54.67	65.92	1.9%
England	57.73	57.86	1.7%
Hong Kong (SAR of China)	36.92	42.17	1.2%
New Zealand	34.71	35.21	1.0%
Singapore	33.65	33.90	1.0%
United States of America	26.29	33.29	1.0%
South Africa	32.10	32.35	0.9%
India	25.40	27.90	0.8%
United Kingdom, nfd	25.80	25.80	0.8%

Table 21: Philosophy load at undergraduate course level in 2008 by country of birth
Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Summary

In 2008 77 per cent of student load in philosophy at undergraduate load is made up of students whose country of birth is Australia. The rest of the student load is made up of enrolments (from 2 per cent and under) from many countries. The most notable are China; England; Hong Kong; New Zealand; Singapore; USA; South Africa; India and the UK.

Student Experience

Information in this section is drawn from data prepared by Graduates Careers Australia.⁶ Data from Australian Graduate Survey (AGS) is conducted around four months after the completion of the qualification.⁷

In addition, survey respondents were asked to nominate a staff member who uses innovative evaluation procedures or has exceptional teaching evaluations for further

⁶ The data was prepared for the DASSH project 'Scoping the BA' (Gannaway and Trent 2009) from the Course Experience Questionnaire (CEQ) for Arts students and was presented as pivot tables at http://www.dassh.edu.au/basp/data_excel. The project team thanks the Scoping the Project BA project Leader for access to this data.

⁷ The ACER Graduates pathway 2008 publication tracks outcomes 5 years out, but reports outcomes only to the broad field of education "Society and Culture" (Coates and Edwards 2009). Australian Council for Educational Research (2008), ACER graduate pathways survey, <http://www.deewr.gov.au/HigherEducation/Publications/Pages/The2008GraduatePathwaysSurvey.aspx>.

contact. On the basis of these nominations, round table discussions on issues arising in undergraduate learning and teaching were conducted. Case studies arising out of the discussions can be found [here](#).

In summary, this section shows that students who have studied philosophy are happy with their study. They rank the quality of their course in the top 15 per cent of disciplines and academic groupings for Arts students 2001—2006. Their student satisfaction with their generic skill development is ranked above the average for Arts students, with notably higher than average responses to the statements “The course sharpened my analytic skills” and “The course developed my problem-solving skills”. The section also shows that the main sectors of employment for philosophy graduates are the private sector, education, government, self-employment and the non-profit sector. The main employers of philosophy graduates are Education; Finance, Health and Community Services; Wholesale and Retail Trade; Government Administration and Defence; and Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants. However, whilst philosophy graduates are reported in higher demand, most philosophy programs do not track the career destinations of their graduates.

In addition, in response to the question: Is there an active philosophy society at your University?; just over half the programs (13 of 24) responded, Yes. A couple noted that whilst philosophy societies had been in active in the past, they were no longer.

Student satisfaction

The Course Experience Questionnaire (GCA) measures Arts Students' overall satisfaction with their program of study and Students' satisfaction with their generic skill development as provided by their program of study. In response to the statement: Overall, I was satisfied with the quality of this course, where 1 = Strongly disagree and 5 = Strongly agree, philosophy students rate their discipline at 6th place of a total of 41 disciplines and academic groupings - i.e. in the top 15 percent at 4.2. Notably, philosophy and religious studies students [as a combined reported grouping] rank their overall satisfaction the highest of all disciplines and groupings in which Arts Students are enrolled 2001-6 at 4.52 [1 of 41].), followed by Australian Indigenous languages, Gender Specific Studies, History, Religion and then Philosophy.

In response to a set of statements developed to measure Arts students' satisfaction with their generic skill development as provided by their discipline or grouping of study, philosophy and philosophy and religion students rate their experience above the average for Arts students, with notably higher than the average responses to the statements: “The course sharpened my analytic skills” and “The course developed my problem-solving skills”. To the statement: “The course sharpened my analytic skills”, the overall average was: 4.07, the philosophy average: 4.43. To the statement: “The course developed my problem-solving skills”, the overall average was: 3.57, the philosophy average: 3.89. Philosophy students also had higher than average responses to the statements: “As a result of my course, I feel confident about tackling unfamiliar problems”; “The course improved my skills in written communication”; and “My course helped me to develop the ability to plan my own work. To the statement: “The course helped me develop my ability to work as a team member”, philosophy students rate their satisfaction below the average.

Career choices after graduation

Philosophy Graduates and Employability

In recent years, labour market shifts have revealed an unexpected new interest by employers in the skills of philosophy students. In the UK there are reports that philosophy graduates are able to earn higher salaries because of the perception that their skills in reasoning and the analysis of complex problems, and their ability to adapt reasoning to new information, make them better able to adapt to changing economic, regulatory and fiscal conditions (Shepherd 2007). There are similar reports from Canada (Drolet 2008), the USA and Australia (Gilling 2008). This is independent of emerging evidence that 10 years after graduation, Australian graduates who have completed a BA degree are able, on average, to earn more than the average university graduate (excluding those who studied dentistry). (This issue is being pursued in the current ALTC Project, 'Employability of Bachelor of Arts Graduates', Harvey, 2009). Recent data from PayScale.com, noted by the American Philosophical Association, shows that median salaries for philosophy majors ranks sixteenth in mid-career and that the salaries of philosophy graduates have increased.⁸

Responses to the survey show that most programs do not track career choices of students who have majored in philosophy. In response to this question, 10 per cent answered yes, and 90 per cent answered no. And of those that said yes, there was little detail. Whilst philosophy programs do not track career choices of philosophy majors formally, some do keep some records of where philosophy majors have gone. Some respondents noted contacts in the Scholarships or Careers Offices. However, obtaining data from careers offices by specialisation of major (rather than Faculty) has proved difficult to obtain. Whilst there is evidence that graduates with philosophical skills are in greater demand, both here and overseas (Cambourne 2008, Drolet 2008, Duffy 2008, Fearn 2009, Gilling 2008, Monaghan 2009 and Shepard 2007), we do not have direct evidence of where philosophy graduates go. A study that explores the areas of employment and the skills respected by employers would be helpful for both the teaching community and the philosophy graduates themselves. For further recommendations from the Forward Thinking Project, see the [Final Report](#).

⁸ **'Philosophy Majors and Jobs:** Every year around graduation time we hear the reports of average starting salary of college graduates by major. This data is often used to discourage people from majoring in disciplines like philosophy. Now, however, PayScale.com has released data showing average mid-career salaries of college graduates by major. This data makes the philosophy major look like a much more prudent choice. PayScale.com's current data on "Best Undergrad College Degrees By Salary (www.payscale.com/2008-best-colleges/degrees.asp) lists starting median salary and mid-career (15.5 years after graduation) median salary for 50 different university majors. Of the fifty, the philosophy major ranks sixteenth in mid-career median salary. Seven of the majors ranking above philosophy are various engineering fields. Of particular interest is the comparison with Business Management. The starting median salary for Business Management majors is \$43,000, while the starting median salary for Philosophy majors is \$39,900. By mid-career, however, the median salary for Business Management majors has risen to \$72,100, while the median salary for Philosophy majors has jumped to \$81,200.:'; <http://www.apaonline.org//default.aspx>; accessed Monday 4th January 2010.

What sector do philosophy students end up in and who are they employed by?

The Graduate Destinations Survey (GDS) asks for information about sector of employment, employer, full-time and part-time employment, and salary. Data from Arts Students, which isolates Students for the field of study code 917 philosophy and religious studies, shows that most philosophy graduates 'end up' in the private sector, then education, closely followed by government, then those that are self-employed and those in the non-profit sector.⁹ In answer to the question: "What sector do students end up in and in what numbers across institution and years (2001-2006)", 42 per cent (276 of 655) went into the private sector; 12 per cent (79 of 655) into Public Education; 9.6 percent are self-employed (63 of 655); 9 per cent (59 of 655) in State Government; 7.5 per cent (49 of 655) in Non-profit; 5.3 per cent (35 of 655) end up in Government; 4.4 per cent (29 of 655) in Private Education; 2 per cent (13 of 655) in category Other and 1.1 per cent (7 of 655) in Local Government.

In answer to the question: Who are students employed by and in what numbers across institution and years (2001-2006)?, we see that the main employers of philosophy graduates are Education; Finance, Health and Community Services; Wholesale and Retail Trade; Government Administration and Defence; and Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants. Of those whose employer is known, Education is the highest employer (24.3 per cent), followed by Finance (16.2 per cent), Health and Community Services (13.8 per cent) and Wholesale and Retail Trade (12.5 per cent). Government Administration and Defence employs 8.8 per cent and Accommodation, Cafes and Restaurants 6 per cent. All other categories of employer record less than 5 per cent.

Program & Curriculum

The information in the following section is drawn from several sources. Information relating to curriculum structure and trends is based on responses to the survey of philosophy programs. Twenty four Heads (discipline coordinators or others) responded to the survey. For a full list of respondents see Appendix 2 of this report. For a full list of survey questions see Appendix 2 of the [Final Report](#). Information relating to teaching modes and areas covered by philosophy programs is drawn from a survey of online course handbooks conducted by members of the project team. For a full list of philosophy programs included in the handbook survey see Appendix 3 of this report. Information related to the sub-section on the major, which follows, is drawn from BA program surveys produced by the DASSH BA Arts Scoping Project (Gannaway and Trent 2008) and philosophy program websites.

The major in philosophy

The three year BA is typically made up of 24 single semester units, and the philosophy major is a more or less structured program of study that comprises approximately one-third of the degree, or 8 units. Most philosophy majors require no more than 2 units at

⁹ This data was prepared by Graduate Careers Australia for the DASSH project 'Scoping the BA', and are available at http://www.dassh.edu.au/basp/data_excel. The project team thanks the Scoping the Project BA project Leader for access to this data.

introductory level, but there are two clear trends in upper level philosophy teaching. One is to provide students with maximal choice and no formal study structure, where students complete 6-8 units at 200 or 300 level to complete their major from a wide range of electives. The other is to structure the program so as to ensure a progression of learning and to require study of a number (often 3-4) of units at 300 or advanced level. In a smaller number of this latter group of philosophy majors are those that include a “pre-honours” unit at 300 level (e.g. University of Sydney).

Curriculum structure

Numbers of units

There is an average of 28 units per program, with an average of 19 offered in one year. There is a significant amount of variation in the number of units offered, between 11 (Swinburne University) and 84 (University of Tasmania). Programs such as at University of Tasmania and LaTrobe University, with large numbers of units listed, include significant numbers of units not offered (for example, University of Tasmania offered 44 out of 84 units in 2008; LaTrobe offered 26 out of 48) as well as co-badged 2nd year/ 3rd year units, which have been treated as distinct where they have different codes. In some cases the co-badged units are otherwise identical, in other cases they differ in assessment. Whilst it is difficult to determine from on-line handbooks just how many courses are active, it seems to be the case that many departments have many courses still listed that have not been taught in a number of years.

The average number of first year units is 4 (3.85), with most (3.67) offered within a year. Deakin University offered the fewest (2 courses). The majority of philosophy departments taught 3-4 courses per year. The average number of units at 2nd/3rd year is 24. There are a number of departments that teach 6 courses each year (University of Tasmania and University of Newcastle, though some of the courses offered are service courses to specific degrees such as police ethics).

More than half of programs (57 per cent) differentiate between 2nd and 3rd year units. University of Tasmania and La Trobe University have differentiated codes, but the same units/assessment, the other programs that differentiate do so by having distinct units taught only at 2nd year or 3rd year, or differentiated assessment.

Only a small number of programs have capstone unit for majors in philosophy (for example: Macquarie University and University of Melbourne). A number of programs were set to introduce capstone courses in the next few years and some of these may also double as pre-honours courses.

Core units

In response to the question: Are students required to complete any specific core units in order to major in Philosophy?, respondents showed quite a bit of variation. Over half of the programs have no specific core unit requirements. Of the others, many specify particular first year units. La Trobe University is the only program that will soon require core units at all levels. A few programs (University of Queensland, Macquarie University, University of Melbourne) have moved to a model of a required capstone unit at 300

level. In all three cases, this move has been driven by university-wide curriculum changes.

In response to the question: Is there provision for students to count non-Philosophy units toward a Philosophy major?, there was again considerable variation. About a third of programs don't allow non-philosophy courses to be counted towards the major. Of the majority that do, some seem to allow this on an ad hoc basis. In other cases, specific units from a range of different disciplines areas (but especially politics) have been cross-listed as counting towards a Philosophy major.

Service units to other disciplines

In answer to the question: Does your program teach service units specifically designed for other (non philosophy) programs?, about 2/3rds of programs seem to be involved in service teaching, mainly teaching a range of professional and applied ethics units in health, law, business and media degrees. Critical thinking courses also seem to be offered as service units in a range of programs.

In response to the question: Are units in your program taught (wholly or in part) by staff members from a non-philosophy discipline?; less than a third of programs responded 'yes', although the nature and extent of the teaching by staff in non-philosophy disciplines is not specified. However it appears that this happens mainly in applied ethics units taught as service units to other disciplines.

Teaching modes and teaching hours per unit

Philosophy programs use different teaching modes —traditional lectures-plus-tutorials; seminars; workshops—depending on unit level.

1st year

At 1st year level, of the 15 programs for which timetabling information was available, 13 have three contact hours per week, most commonly two 1-hour lectures and a 1 hour tutorial (used in 11 programs). A different mode was used for Critical Thinking /Critical Reasoning at Flinders University (1.5 hour seminar) and Monash University (1 hour plus 2 hour lab). Eight programs used the same mode in each 1st year unit. University of Sydney HPS had more contact hours, with 4 contact hours per week on all units at all levels, and Murdoch University had fewer, with one 1 hour lecture plus one 1.5 hour tutorial per week at all levels. Swinburne University had 2.5-3 hours of lectures and tutorials.

2nd year

At 2nd year, most units still have three contact hours per week. The most common mode was still two 1-hour lectures and a 1 hour tutorial (used in 11 programs). Some programs use 2-hour seminars at 2nd year level, either independently (Monash University) or with other lectures or tutorials (LaTrobe University, Swinburne University, University of Western Australia). As at 1st year, Murdoch University has 2.5 hours per week and University of Sydney HPS has 4. Some programs have fewer tutorials at 2nd year level. University of Tasmania has 6-9 tutorials per semester, and UWA has 10.

3rd year

At 3rd year, ten programs have three contact hours a week, with fewer hours at Monash University (2 hours per week), Murdoch University (2.5) and University of Queensland (2), and more at University of Sydney HPS (4) and University of Western Australia (4). At this level, seminars are used by Monash University, LaTrobe University, University of Queensland, Swinburne University and University of Western Australia.

At all levels, there was a high degree of uniformity at each level within each program.¹⁰

Areas covered by program

1st Year

Most programs offer at least one broad introductory unit at 1st year level usually, covering metaphysics and epistemology with some history of philosophy. Other common 1st year areas are Critical Thinking (15 programs out of 21), Logic (6), ethical/moral/political Philosophy (10), history of philosophy (4) and applied ethics (4). Critical thinking, while one of the most common first year philosophy subjects, is however generally a service course rather than a fully-fledged introduction to philosophy. Only four programs offered critical thinking beyond first year.

2nd and 3rd Year

At second and third year, the most commonly taught areas (from the information obtainable through handbooks) were:¹¹

- European Philosophy (55 units),
- Social and Political Philosophy (54),
- Applied and Professional Ethics (49),
- Metaphysics (46),
- History of Philosophy (44),
- Philosophy of Science (44),
- Moral Philosophy (41),
- Logic (40),
- Philosophy of Mind (31),
- Epistemology (21),
- Asian Philosophy (18),
- Aesthetics (17),
- Critical Thinking (4).¹²

¹⁰ Data in this section is drawn from a survey of online course Handbooks.

¹¹ Note: The lines between social and political philosophy, and between history of philosophy and European philosophy are not always easy to draw, since there is often considerable overlap between the content of these courses. In assigning courses to the history of philosophy or European philosophy we used the following principle: Any course that was a single named figure was taken to be a history of philosophy course, unless it was a notably continental thinker of the 20th C, such as for example a course on Heidegger. Philosophy of religion was listed under metaphysics.

¹² Data in this section is drawn from a survey of online course Handbooks.

Curriculum trends

In response to the question: Are there specific areas of Philosophy that were taught in the decade 1991-2000 but are no longer taught or taught in less depth?¹³, most programs identified areas that they no longer teach or that they now teach in less depth than in the past. However, no clear patterns or trends across programs emerged from responses to this question, suggesting that changes to course offerings are very much driven by changes in staffing.

In response to the question: Have any new teaching areas emerged that were not taught, or taught only in passing, in the decade 1991-2000?, similar observations apply as above; there are no clear patterns or trends across programs. A few programs have introduced Asian philosophy, and a few have introduced applied ethics. However, others have reduced their teaching in these areas. Again, it seems likely that this is driven by staff changes and perhaps to some extent by student demand. But the demand seems to be shaped at least to some degree by the broader institutional context.

Graduate attributes

Nearly all universities now identify specific Graduate attributes, or skills that students are expected to develop during their degree programs. Graduate attributes are usually determined by the university, but some universities allow disciplines to develop discipline-specific lists of Graduate attributes. Many universities require graduate attributes to be included in the curriculum, for example in course design, course proposals, assessment and teaching material.

In response to the question: have you been integrating the development of graduate attributes into your philosophy curriculum?; a majority of programs responded Yes.

In response to the question concerning whether specific graduate attributes have been determined by the University, developed by the Philosophy discipline, or both, there was significant variation. About half the programs seem required to adopt university determined attributes. The rest seem to have some latitude to develop their own, within the context of university guidelines.

The philosophy group at the University of Queensland has developed a set of discipline specific graduate attributes, benchmarked against those devised by the British Association of Philosophy and published through the QAA for higher education in the UK.¹⁴ As yet, these have not been incorporated as part of University policy.

¹³ For a couple of programs the question proved inappropriate at the program was introduced after 1991 (University of Western Sydney) or the program is too small (University of Ballarat).

¹⁴ In 2000, the Quality Assurance Agency (QAA) for Higher Education in the UK released a subject benchmark statement for philosophy (Bachelor's degree with honours). This was revised in 2007 (QAA 2007). The statement lists academic standards for philosophy, including a statement of the nature and extent of philosophy teaching, subject knowledge, understanding and skills, teaching, learning and assessment, as well as benchmark standards and levels of achievement.

Graduate attributes & Curriculum mapping

In response to the question: Are graduate attributes used in unit design (i.e. design of content, assessment methods, teaching methods?), it appears that in many institutions, graduate attributes must be linked to assessment. In a few, they also must be used in curriculum design.

In response to the question: Are there any particular attributes your program has difficulty embedding in its curriculum?, most programs indicated no difficulties embedding graduate attributes into their curriculum. In cases where problems arise it seems to be because the university determines the attributes, without any latitude being given to disciplinary differences.

Changes to the BA degree and/or program

In response to the question: Has there been any major change to your BA degree or to your program in the period 2001-8 that should be taken into account in interpreting the data gathered here? (e.g. a new BA degree structure, a major Faculty restructuring, excluding staff movements and curriculum trends), 25 per cent of respondents answered YES and 75 per cent, NO.

In response to the question: Are there any major changes planned for your BA degree or your program in the next five years (2009-2013)?, 50 of respondents answered YES and 50 per cent NO.

Teaching Issues

Data used in this section is drawn from the responses to the survey of philosophy programs. Twenty four Heads (discipline coordinators or others) responded to the survey. For a full list of respondents see Appendix 2 of this report. For a full list of survey questions see Appendix 2 of the [Final Report](#).

Developments and trends in teaching

Changes in teaching such as increased use of on-line teaching and team teaching.

In response to the question: Approximately what proportion of units in your program are taught by a team of academics (not including part-time tutors)?, there were very significant variations in response across programs. Half (12/24) the programs surveyed indicate that very few units are team taught (0-20 per cent). In the remaining programs there seems to be an even split between those with around half units team taught and those where most or all units are team taught.

In response to the question: Have there been any innovations in teaching modes in your program?, half the philosophy programs (12/24) reported using on-line resources including: the introduction of e-learning tools; on-line self-testing; online blogs and quizzes, and podcasting; 1 program noted several staff use the Masur method, whilst

some use the Keller plan. Others reported the use of interactive teaching in lectures and tutorials, utilising a component of peer assessment in some writing tasks and another using music to present philosophical argument. A significant number of programs (9/24) reported either no innovations or did not respond to the question.

On-line learning

Only one out of 24 Programs responding to the Program Survey made no use of electronic resources in teaching. Almost all programs reported using some form of electronic resources, including using discussion boards or email to communicate with students; making audio recordings of lectures available on-line; using on-line quizzes; and using electronic submission of assignments. In response to the question: Are web-based learning and teaching tools typically used in the internal delivery of first, second, or third year units? 80 per cent of programs reported using discussion boards and email; 75 per cent reported that audio recordings of lectures were available on-line; 30 per cent reported using electronic submission of assessment and 50 per cent reported using on-line quizzes.

In response to the question: Are there any internal units taught solely online?, a majority of respondents answered No (including a few that did not answer the question). Of those that responded Yes, La Trobe University noted a critical thinking unit (one semester in 1st year) offered solely online; Monash University noted units are solely online for off-campus delivery of the major and Australian Catholic University have one master's unit in Philosophy and Religion offered solely online. At University of Queensland there are several units taught solely online though to upper levels.

Around half the programs reported that e-resources improved students' access to teaching materials and improved communication with and between students. In response to the question: What are the advantages, if any, of using online teaching resources in your program? 2/20 reported no advantages; 7/20 reported that it improves students' access to lectures; 3/20 reported that it improves communication with and between students; 1/20 reported that it improves students' engagement; and 1/20 reported that it improves lecture attendance.

However, significant numbers of Programs reported that the use of e-resources reduced class attendance and in-class interactions. Several also reported that reliance on e-resources encourages poor study habits. A common complaint was that, overall, the new technologies were less time-efficient than traditional teaching methods. Technical problems were also widely reported. Overall, considerable doubts were expressed about the educational value of on-line technology. In response to the question: What difficulties, if any, has your program encountered in using online teaching resources?, 6/20 noted technical problems; 3/20 reported reduced class interactions; 5/20 reported reduced class attendance; 3/20 reported that it encourages poor study habits; and 4/20 reported that it is time intensive for staff.

Broadly speaking, there appear to be two opposed positions on e-resources. On the one hand, many staff expressed strong positive attitudes towards the use of e-resources to support learning and teaching philosophy at university. On the other, a considerable number of staff expressed strong negative attitudes towards the use of e-resources, because students may come to view the downloading of online material as an easy alternative to attending lectures and actively engaging in tutorial discussion. One

academic went as far as to describe the use of e-resources as "an educational cane toad".

Clearly further research on the advantages and disadvantages of the use of on-line teaching tools is required. It may be that such tools are useful in some teaching areas of the discipline (for example logic and critical reasoning) but of less value in others (for example ethics). It is also possible that important distinctions can be made amongst the wide variety of on-line resources that are available and their effective deployment in teaching and learning. It may be, for example, that the use of email and discussion boards fosters communication with and between students, but that providing excessively detailed lecture notes on-line discourages students from independent learning.

A further very striking feature of the Project's research in this area was the high level of dissatisfaction with the training provided by universities in the use of on-line facilities. Only half the respondents reported that the training available in the *construction* of on-line resources was useful; and only 40 per cent reported that training in the *use* of on-line resources in teaching was useful. Clearly there is a major issue here which universities need to address.

In response to the question: Is there training/support available for staff in the *construction* of online teaching resources?, 18 (90 per cent) responded yes and 2 (10 per cent), no. In response to the question: Have most staff in your program availed themselves of the training/support provided?, of the programs responding to the question, about 50 per cent responded yes, and about 50 per cent, no. In response to the question: Do staff typically find the training/support helpful?, of the programs responding to the question, about 50 per cent responded yes, and about 50 per cent, no. In response to the question: Is there training/support available for staff in *teaching* with online resources?, of the programs responding to the question, about 95 per cent responded yes, and about 5 per cent, no. In response to the question: Have most staff in your program availed themselves of the training/support provided?, of the programs responding to the question, about 28 per cent responded yes, and about 72 per cent, no. In response to the question: Do staff typically find the training/support helpful?, of the programs responding to the question, 29 per cent responded yes, and 71 per cent, no.

Assessment

Assessment modes

1st year

Only University of New South Wales HPS and University of Sydney HPS had uniform assessment across all units, with other programs having different assessment for different units. The uniformity can only be determined by on-line handbook and it may be the case that all courses have a generic assessment package for the purposes of the on-line handbook but actual assessment practices in individual units may vary considerably.

The most common form of assessment at this level were essays, used by at least some units in all programs. Written essay length varied considerably, from 550 to 2000 words. Most programs (10) also included assessment based on tutorial

participation/presentations. Nine programs use formal exams, worth up to 60 per cent (Sydney), and tests were used by six programs. Nine programs use homework exercises or other short assignments. Other forms of assessment were bibliographic exercises (ANU) and quizzes (UQ). The number of assessment tasks varied greatly. Some programs had only two assessment tasks while others had five. A common assessment package for standard level one philosophy courses was two short written assignments, a test or exam and participation. Critical thinking, which is usually taught at first year, has the most diverse assessment package. This reflects the the content of these courses, which is well suited to on-line discussion, quizzes and short tests.

2nd and 3rd year

From the information given it appears that only Murdoch University and University of Sydney HPS had uniform assessment across all units. All programs used essays at this level, ranging from “short essays” (University of Sydney HPS) up to 5000 word essays in some units at Melbourne. Essay length varied within, as well as across, programs, for example, essays at Australian National University were from 1500-4000 words, and 1250-3000 words at LaTrobe University. A single major essay was worth up to 50 per cent in many programs, and up to 70 per cent at Newcastle, and 100 per cent in some units at University of Melbourne. Some units at Australian National University and Monash University offered students choice about how they were assessed (for example, either an exam or additional written work).

Assessment tasks were more varied at 2nd year level. As well as the modes of assessment used at 1st year level, 2nd year assessment tasks included essay outlines (University of Sydney), article reviews or précis (Australian National University, University of New South Wales, University of Western Australia), journals and research journals (University of Western Australia, University of New South Wales), Research portfolios (University of New South Wales HPS) and Creative writing (University of Queensland). All programs for which information was available assessed tutorial presentations or participation in at least some units at this level. The weightings for this part of the assessment varied between 3 per cent (University of Melbourne) to 25 per cent in some units at University of New South Wales.

At 3rd year, similar assessment was used to 2nd year. Most institutions did not make any consistent distinction between the amount of assessment at 2nd and 3rd year. Assessment tasks used were the same as at 2nd year, except for blogs added for 3rd year at Deakin University.¹⁵

Developments and Trends

The following table lists the results in answer to the question: What developments and trends in assessment modes have occurred since 2000? (For example, online quizzes, re-introduction of exams etc.).

¹⁵ Data in this section is drawn from a survey of online course Handbooks. Information from 15 programs was available.

On-line assessment: 31 per cent
Increased use of exams: 19 per cent
More short assignments: 4 per cent
Journals: 4 per cent
Group presentations: 4 per cent
In-class quizzes: 4 per cent
Reading assignments: 4 per cent
Multi-choice exams: 4 per cent
Debates: 4 per cent
Tutorial participation: 4 per cent
No developments: 18 per cent

Over the last decade there has been considerable interest in the development of assessment methods in the discipline of Philosophy. Only 20 per cent of Programs report making no changes to their approach to assessment. The most common areas of change were the introduction of on-line assessment, the re-introduction of examinations, and reliance on shorter forms of assessment.

Two issues appear to be driving the development of new approaches to assessment. First, with the increase of staff-student ratios, many programs are looking for ways to achieve good learning outcomes more efficiently; in particular, they are seeking methods of both summative and formative assessment that are time-efficient. This is clearly a significant part of the rationale behind the increased use of shorter assignments, and is part of the explanation for the increased reliance on on-line quizzes, which can, in some cases, be graded by computer.

The second issue driving the development of assessment concerns plagiarism (see below). The return to examinations is very often motivated by the need for a form of assessment which is largely secure against plagiarism. Intriguingly, nearly three quarters of Programs report relying on examinations to provide a form of assessment in which plagiarism is very difficult. In addition, a clear majority of programs report using specialist plagiarism such as Turnitin, or simply using Google to catch offenders.

Assessment and plagiarism

In response to the question: Which (if any) of the following methods for controlling plagiarism are used by your program: Specialist plagiarism detection software; Google; Examination; Other, 67 per cent noted Specialist software; 63 per cent Google and 63 per cent Exams and 21 per cent Other, including the use of continuous assessment and very specific questions and checking unexpected performance outcomes.

Evaluation of teaching

In response to the question: What methods are used to evaluate teaching performance? (Peer evaluation, formal student evaluation process (on-line or paper), etc), all programs responded that formal student evaluations are used to evaluate teaching performance. In addition, some also noted the use of Formal peer evaluations, as well as, informal peer evaluations and open response surveys.

Survey respondents were asked to nominate a staff member who uses innovative evaluation procedures or has exceptional teaching evaluations for further contact. On the basis of these nominations, round table discussions on issues arising in undergraduate learning and teaching were conducted. Case studies arising out of the discussions include evaluation and can be found [here](#).

Changes in Class Sizes

The survey requested information about class sizes by year and class type for 2000 to 2008. Over this period average 1st year lecture enrolments increased by 12%, with average 1st year tutorial enrolments up by 27%. 2nd and 3rd year class sizes showed a similar upward trend, with seminars up 19%, lectures up 29%, and tutorials up 15%.

Teaching to Primary and Secondary Schools

A number of philosophy programs are involved in teaching philosophy to primary and/or secondary schools, however the mode of involvement varies from formalised arrangements to informal ad hoc events. In response to the question: Is your program involved in teaching philosophy to primary or secondary schools?; just over half the programs surveyed (14 of 24) reported some involvement. This ranged from specific courses at or run by the University program, for senior years, such as courses for gifted and talented students (Macquarie); HSC Distinction course (University of New England) University of Sydney, Flinders University, La Trobe University, Monash University (VCE Enhancement); a version of 1st year (University of Newcastle and University of Sydney [PHIL 106 Mind & Morality], University of Melbourne), some of these are run occasionally or as regular sessions resulting in recognised qualifications; as well as an outreach program to primary and secondary students (University of Queensland) to occasional lectures and events, such as, conducting Socratic dialogues at Secondary schools (Deakin University), occasional lectures and school visits (Murdoch University; University of Western Australia; Bond University), A couple of programs note that staff in their program have had some involvement in curriculum design in their state.

Distance learning

Distance education in philosophy in Australia is offered according to two broad models:

- Traditional External in which students are enrolled in the relevant university.
- Open Education in which students are enrolled via OUA (Open University Australia).

Six universities provide Traditional External offerings: Monash University, Murdoch University, University of New England, Griffith University, Macquarie University and the University of Tasmania. Of these, five were surveyed concerning their offerings, student cohort, Failure, attrition and plagiarism rates, and training and workload. A list of those interviewed and the questions used are listed in Appendix 4 of this Report.

Macquarie University offers the vast majority of OUA units¹⁶ and is detailed separately to the Traditional External offerings on Macquarie University.

Traditional External

The Traditional External survey examined four areas:

- Program and unit offerings.
- Student cohorts.
- Failure, attrition and plagiarism rates.
- Training and workload.

Programs and Units Offerings

It is possible to complete a major in philosophy at all surveyed universities via the Traditional External model of delivery. Murdoch University and University of New England offer all units externally, while Macquarie University offers most units externally when they are offered internally (i.e. not being "rested" that year). At University of Tasmania approximately one third of all units are offered externally each year. Monash University presently offers eight units externally each year—which represents around one third of all units—but hopes to expand this by another 3 units soon.

All surveyed institutions make extensive use of the Internet to deliver unit materials. In addition, all make some use of other delivery modes:

- Macquarie University: the vast majority of the learning materials for all units are online, although some units still provide hardcopies of the unit readers.
- Monash University: students are provided with a hardcopy of the study guide for all units.
- University of New England: in addition to online delivery, some materials in some units are provided on CD ROM.
- University of Tasmania: the provision of hardcopies of materials is dependent on the unit convenor.
- Murdoch University: Students are provided with hardcopies of lecture notes.

Neither Murdoch University, nor Monash University, offer on campus sessions for external students, although Monash does provide an optional introductory workshop to online study. At UTAS, on campus sessions are offered at convenors' digression. This is also the case at MQ, but only for first-year units. At University of New England, on-campus sessions are optional for students.

Macquarie offers an external Graduate Diploma and has some external HDR students, but does not have external post-graduate course-work units. Monash offers an external Master program in Bioethics. University of New England offers an external honours. This has a compulsory on-campus component. The means of supervision (e.g. email, phone, Scope) is at the discretion of students and supervisors. Murdoch does not offer external honours, but does have an external Masters program arranged around independent study contracts.

¹⁶ Information on these offerings was provided by Dr Jennifer Duke-Yonge.

Student Cohorts

In all cases, the external student cohort was reported to be the “same” or “very similar” to the internal cohort. No institution reports more than “very few” overseas external students. Indeed, in all but one case at least 50 per cent of the student external cohort is reported as local students. The highest rate is reported at MQ with “a vast majority” reported as local and only a few outside of the Sydney region. UNE is the outlier with “few” distance students reported as local.

Failure, Attrition and Plagiarism Rates

Surprisingly, relative failure, attrition and plagiarism rates differ across institutions. University of New England and Murdoch report no noticeable difference in failure rates between internal and external cohorts. At Monash University, failure rates are reported as very similar with the possibility that externals actually fail less often than internal students. At both Macquarie University and University of Tasmania failure rates are reported as higher for externals. At University of Tasmania this is reported to be due to a large number of “no shows”, especially in first-year.

University of New England report similar attrition rates for both internal and external. At Monash University, attrition rates mirror failure rates: i.e. similar rates of attrition with the possibility that externals actually withdraw less often than internal students. Macquarie University reports slightly higher attrition for externals, while reports University of Tasmania approximately double the attrition rate for externals. Despite similar failure rates, Murdoch reports higher attrition rates for externals across all years.

In contrast to the common perception of higher rates of plagiarism from external students, all programs interviewed did not report plagiarism rates higher than those for internal students. University of Tasmania reports “very low” rates of deliberate plagiarism from externals, although unintentional plagiarism due, for example, to confusion over referencing, is claimed to be relatively high. University of New England reports probably no difference with possibility that externals may plagiarize less, due to college culture and associated recycling of paper for internal students. Macquarie University reported plagiarism is no worse among external students, than for internal students. Both Monash University and Murdoch University report substantially less plagiarism from the external cohort. At Monash University this may be a direct result of the assessment environment. All external units at Monash University have a final exam with the exam result expected to match the non-exam grade within 10 per cent. If this tolerance is wildly exceeded the student is questioned and possibly asked to re-sit the exam. This system is used to verify that the non-exam work was the student's own.

Training and Workload

No institution provides specialised distance training for staff, but all provide some level of general pedagogical training and report high levels of staff mentoring. At Macquarie University, there is both Departmental and Faculty/University level training with specific components on distance teaching. Again, University of New England is somewhat of an outlier. Given that the primary mode of delivery at the institution is external, the training

provided by the Learning and Teaching Centre and mentoring within the department is already centrally focused on distance teaching.

In all institutions, convening external units is figured into workload calculations. At Macquarie University, Monash University, University of Tasmania and Murdoch staff receive an additional workload allocation or tutoring assistance for units with external students. The specific institutional context at University of New England enables external workload calculation to be treated exactly as internal calculations.

Student load

The following table shows a breakdown of Philosophy load at Bachelor level in 2008 by mode of attendance – full time/part time.

Sum of EFTSL		
Mode of attendance	Bachelor	
External	204	6 %
Internal	3144	94 %
Multi-modal	0	

Table 22: Philosophy load at Bachelor level in 2008 by mode of attendance
Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Summary

6 percent of EFTSU at the Bachelor degree level in 2008 was external.

The following table shows a breakdown of philosophy load at Bachelor level in 2008 by mode of attendance (internal/external) and type of enrolment (full-time/part-time).

Sum of EFTSL				
Level of course	Type	Mode	Total	
Bachelor	Full-time	External	117	4%
		Internal	2865	96%
	Full-time Total		2982	
	Part-time	External	87	24%
		Internal	280	76%
	Part-time Total		366	
Bachelor Total			3348	

Table 23: Philosophy load at Bachelor level in 2008 by mode of attendance (internal/external) and type of enrolment (full-time/part-time)
Source: DEEWR, *Selected Higher Education Statistics*

Summary

External students make up 4 per cent of full time enrolled load in 2008 and 24 per cent of part-time enrolled load. 42 per cent of external student load at Bachelor course level is Part Time.

Open Universities Australia

The only OUA providers currently offering qualifications in philosophy are Macquarie (BA) and Griffith (Graduate Certificate in Philosophical Studies). Monash and Griffith both offered undergraduate Philosophy prior to 2004.

Macquarie University

Macquarie University offers nine units via OUA each year. All these are delivered completely online. All units correspond, with only minor modification, to internal units. The OUA cohort is substantially different to the internal cohort and are scattered both around Australia and overseas. There are significantly worse failure and attrition rates, especially in first year units.

Casual staff do most OUA teaching, but there is a dedicated OUA coordinator. As is the case with training of Traditional External staff, there are both departmental and Faculty/University (Foundations in L&T) level training with specific components on distance L&T.

The finalising of grade distributions, the grade appeals procedure, and the provision of feedback on student assessments all mirror the procedures and protocols for internal units. The mechanisms for plagiarism detection are essentially the same, but without the use of Turnitin. The penalties for plagiarists are the same as for internal students, though higher rates of plagiarism are reported of OUA students than the internal cohort. The means of obtaining and responding to student feedback mirror those for internal units. Finally, the processes for updating units (assessment tasks and content) are the same as internal units, but the updating occurs less frequently.

Griffith University

Through Open University of Australia, Griffith offers 4 units in Philosophical Studies

- Varieties of Enlightenment
- Advising the Prince: Machiavelli
- Plato and Aristotle
- Contemporary European Philosophy

Students undertake studies in Philosophy through listening to lectures, discussing topics within a course, and written assessments. They can choose between full-time or part-time study, and students are required to have a Bachelors degree in order to qualify for entry into the program.

Three Griffith faculty staff have taught into the program. It is proving to be a successful postgraduate course program – delivered wholly online electronically – and other disciplines within the School of Humanities are now following its lead.

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APPENDIX 1: LIST OF INSTITUTIONS THAT REPORT PHILOSOPHY UNITS TO DEEWR¹⁷

- Australian Catholic University
- Bond University
- University of Adelaide
- University of Ballarat
- Campion Institute Limited, NSW
- Central Queensland University
- Charles Darwin
- Charles Sturt University
- Deakin University
- Edith Cowan University
- Flinders University
- Griffith University
- La Trobe University
- Macquarie University
- Monash University
- Murdoch University
- University of Melbourne
- University of Newcastle
- University of New England
- University of New South Wales
- University of Notre Dame
- RMIT
- Queensland University of Technology
- University of Queensland
- The University of SA
- Southern Cross University
- The Southern School of Natural Therapies VIC
- Sydney Institute of Business and Technology
- Swinburne University of Technology
- University of Sydney
- University of Tasmania
- University of Technology, Sydney
- Victoria University
- University of Western Australia
- The University of Western Sydney
- University of Wollongong

¹⁷ Note, not all institutions report load in philosophy units in all years.

APPENDIX 2: LIST OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMS that participated in the survey

- School of Philosophy, Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, [Australian Catholic University](#)
- Philosophy Program, School of Cultural Inquiry, [Australian National University](#)
- Discipline of Philosophy, School of Humanities, [University of Adelaide](#)
- Discipline of Philosophy, School of Behavioural & Social Sciences & Humanities, [University of Ballarat](#)
- Philosophy, School of Humanities, [Bond University](#)
- Philosophy, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, [Charles Sturt University](#)
- Philosophy, School of International and Political Studies, [Deakin University](#)
- Program of Philosophy, School of Humanities, [Flinders University](#)
- Philosophy, School of Communication, Arts and Critical Inquiry, [La Trobe University](#)
- Program of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, [Macquarie University](#)
- Philosophy and Bioethics, School of Philosophical, Historical & International Studies, [Monash University](#)
- Philosophy Program, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, [Murdoch University](#)
- Philosophy, School of Philosophy, Anthropology and Social Sciences, [University of Melbourne](#)
- Philosophy and Religious Studies, School of Humanities and Social Science, [University of Newcastle](#)
- Philosophy, School of Humanities, [University of New England](#)
- School of History and Philosophy, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, [University of New South Wales](#)
- School of Philosophy and Theology, [University of Notre Dame](#)
- Philosophy, School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics, [University of Queensland](#)
- Philosophy and Cultural Inquiry, Faculty of Life and Social Sciences, [Swinburne University of Technology](#)
- Program of Philosophy, School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry, [University of Sydney](#)
- University of Western Sydney
- School of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, [University of Tasmania](#)
- Discipline of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, [University of Western Australia](#)
- Philosophy Program, School of English Literatures & Philosophy, [University of Wollongong](#)

APPENDIX 3: LIST OF PHILOSOPHY PROGRAMS INCLUDED IN HANDBOOK SEARCH

- School of Philosophy, Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, Australian Catholic University
- Philosophy Program, School of Cultural Inquiry, Australian National University
- Discipline of Philosophy, School of Humanities, University of Adelaide
- Philosophy, School of International and Political Studies, Deakin University
- Program of Philosophy, School of Humanities, Flinders University
- Philosophy, School of Communication, Arts and Critical Inquiry, La Trobe University
- Program of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, Macquarie University
- Philosophy and Bioethics, School of Philosophical, Historical & International Studies, Monash University
- Philosophy Program, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, Murdoch University
- Philosophy, School of Philosophy, Anthropology and Social Sciences, University of Melbourne
- Philosophy and Religious Studies, School of Humanities and Social Science, University of Newcastle
- Philosophy, School of Humanities, University of New England
- School of History and Philosophy, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, University of New South Wales
- Philosophy, School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics, University of Queensland
- Philosophy and Cultural Inquiry, Faculty of Life and Social Sciences, Swinburne University of Technology
- Philosophy and HPS, School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry, University of Sydney
- University of Western Sydney
- School of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, University of Tasmania
- Discipline of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Western Australia
- Philosophy Program, School of English Literatures & Philosophy, University of Wollongong

APPENDIX 4: DISTANCE SURVEY

Traditional External

Six universities provide Traditional External offerings: Monash University, Murdoch University, University of New England, Griffith University, Macquarie and the University of Tasmania. Of these five were interviewed by phone by Mitch Parsell (using the questions presented below):

- Dr Jennifer Duke-Yonge (Macquarie University)
- Dr Monima Chadha (Monash University)
- Dr Peta Bowden (Murdoch University)
- Dr Adrian Walsh (University of New England)
- Dr James Chase (University of Tasmania)

Offerings

1. What proportion of units is offered externally in total? Each year?
2. Is it possible to complete a philosophy major externally?
3. What mode of delivery is used: online only, or hardcopy?
4. Are there any on-campus components?
5. Are units typically offered to internal and external students together, or just externally?

Cohort

6. Are external students a distinct group, or can students combine internal and external study?
7. What proportion of students is local? Elsewhere in Australia? Overseas?

Staffing

8. Is specific training available for staff involved in external teaching?
9. Does the department have an official distance coordinator?

Honours, graduate and postgraduate study

10. Are graduate or postgraduate qualifications available externally? By coursework or research?
11. If research or Honours degrees are offered, what arrangements are made for supervision?
12. How do completion rates compare between on-campus and external students?
13. How do failure and attrition rates compare with on-campus students?
14. How do the rates of plagiarism compare with on-campus students?

Quality assurance for units with a fully external cohort

16. Who teaches external units? (Continuing staff, casuals?)
17. Where units are taught by casual staff, is there a distance coordinator responsible for general oversight of the units?
18. Does your department use the same procedures for internal and external units?