



PhD Program in Health Care Ethics
Annual Program Assessment Report
2022-2023

I. STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES, ASSESSMENT METHODS AND RESULTS

Program Learning Outcome 2: Demonstrate a proficiency in formulating original, normative arguments on topics related to health care ethics.

2022-2023 Relevant Assessment Methods:

- (1) Student performance on final normative research paper in courses: HCE6040, HCE 6050, HCE6070, HCE6130, HCE6980 (percentage out of 38 total student papers):

	Problem and Significance	Development of Argument	Integration of Literature	Writing Style and Form
Meets standards	92%	90%	95%	95%
Approaches standards	8%	7%	5%	5%
Fails Standards	0%	3%	0%	0%

- (2) Student performance on written comprehensive exams for Aug. 2021-May 2023: (percentage out of 9 students sitting written exam)

	Problem and Significance	Development of Argument	Integration of Literature	Writing Style and Form
Meets standards	100%	100%	100%	100%
Approaches standards	0%	0%	0%	0%
Fails Standards	0%	0%	0%	0%

Program Learning Outcome 3: Demonstrate a proficiency in applying interdisciplinary theoretical approaches to answer ethical questions in real-life health care contexts.

2021-2023 Relevant Assessment Methods:

(1) Performance in HCE 6013: Practicum, Final Applied Project:

“The final applied project in the PhD practicum is a practical educational, policy or research project originating out of the student’s field experiences aimed at improving the ethical practice of medicine.”

-100% (5/5) students demonstrated proficiency

(2) Performance in the HCE6130: Clinical Ethics, Mock Mediation Sessions:

“Mock ethics mediations require students to engage in a mock ethics consultation by depicting various character roles and motivations, and mediating the ethical conflict toward the goal of a principled resolution.”

-100% (15/15) students demonstrated proficiency

Program Learning Outcome 5: Demonstrate an ability to generate appropriate job search materials (i.e. curriculum vitae, teaching portfolio, writing sample, etc.)

2021-2023 Relevant Assessment Methods:

(1) Job placement rates by job-seeking students and graduates:

-Ten students graduated in 2021-2023 and eight obtained a full-time bioethics-related job upon or prior to graduation.

-In addition, four students obtained a full-time bioethics-related jobs while still being a PhD(c).

II. FINDINGS AND CLOSING THE LOOP: CURRENT ASSESSMENT

A. *When and how did your program faculty share and discuss these results and findings from this cycle of assessment?*

The 2022-2023 PhD Program Assessment Report was presented to the Health Care Ethics graduate faculty at the annual faculty retreat August 16, 2023 spending approximately 45 minutes discussing the findings.

B. *How specifically have you decided to use these findings to improve teaching and learning in your program?*

The 2022-2023 assessment report findings meet our goals and are consistent with previous years’ reports. We only had one instance of “failing standards” in one category of normative writing assessment and found this to be an idiosyncratic result of one student’s performance. We noted that, consistent with faculty expectations, the students “approaching standards” (vs. meeting standards) were much more commonly in their first year of coursework, demonstrating that PLOs improve over time with course experience and mentoring.

III. FINDINGS AND CLOSING THE LOOP: PREVIOUS ASSESSMENTS

- A. What is at least one change your program has implemented in recent years as a result of assessment data?*

In 2020's assessment plan, we noted that more students were "failing" or "approaching" standards under the "development of argument" criteria under PLO #2 "*Demonstrate a proficiency in formulating original, normative arguments on topics related to health care ethics*" than expected. The graduate faculty hypothesized that this may be because some PhD students lack concentrated study in a primary discipline (philosophy, theology, social sciences, law, etc.) via a Masters degree in one of these fields, and thus struggle to deploy discipline-specific methodologies toward the goal of original normative bioethics arguments. Thus, the curriculum "elective" categories were changed from requiring 12 credit hours of any elective course, to requiring 12 credit hours in each of two elective categories: "Disciplinary Lens" (which requires concentrated coursework in a primary disciplinary methodology), and "Bioethics Content", which covers other, non-methodological content related to bioethics. Students with an MA degree may count up to 12 hours total as advanced standing toward these requirements.

- B. How has this change/have these changes been assessed?*

We have primarily utilized percentages of students "meeting standards" vs. "approaching standards" or failing standards in PLO #2, skill "Development of Argument". We have compared percentages from assessment reports prior to this change with more recent assessment data. We have also discussed the graduate faculty's experience with student demonstration of this skill in HCE graduate coursework.

- C. What were the findings of the assessment?*

Using assessment data from years 2020-2023, we have noted an increase in the percentage of students "meeting standards" in this assessment category, from 65% in 2020-2021 to 90% in this year's assessment report. We believe this is evidence that the new elective structure, in addition to general faculty awareness of and attention to this outcome, are improving student performance in this skill.

- D. How do you plan to (continue to) use this information moving forward?*

We will keep the new elective structure and continue monitoring student performance in their ability to adequately develop an argument in normative research papers.