

PHILOSOPHY IN AUSTRALIAN UNIVERSITIES

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 of reports consists in 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 provides a summary of the Australian Universities in which philosophy is taught.

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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Australian Universities in which philosophy is taught

Philosophy retains an important role within the Bachelor of Arts in Australia, and philosophy is taught in most Universities. In 25 Australian Universities, philosophy is offered as a program of study, providing students with the opportunity to major in philosophy and to pursue postgraduate study in the discipline. In these programs, the program is taught by a discipline specific academic staff grouping/department. (For further information about the use of the term program see the section on definitions that follows).

Australian Capital Territory

- Philosophy Program, School of Cultural Inquiry, [Australian National University](#)
- School of Philosophy, Research School of Social Sciences, [Australian National University \(RSSS\)](#)¹

New South Wales

- Department of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, [Macquarie University](#)
- 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](#)
- Department of Philosophy, School of Philosophical and Historical Inquiry, [University of Sydney](#)
- University of Western Sydney²
- Philosophy Program, School of English Literatures and Philosophy, [University of Wollongong](#)

Queensland

- Philosophy, School of Humanities, [Bond University](#)
- Philosophy and Ethics, Arts, Languages and Criminology, [Griffith University](#)³
- Philosophy, School of History, Philosophy, Religion and Classics, [University of Queensland](#)

South Australia

- Department of Philosophy, School of Humanities, [Flinders University](#)
- Discipline of Philosophy, School of Humanities, [University of Adelaide](#)

Tasmania

- School of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, [University of Tasmania](#)

¹ This is a Research Higher Degree program only. As of 2010 the two separate philosophy programs at ANU are to be integrated.

² There is not a single major called "philosophy" at the University of Western Sydney. Philosophy is split between the School of Humanities and Research Centres such as Writing and Society, and the Centre for Citizenship and Public Policy. There is no arrangement of academic specific discipline staff in one administrative grouping.

³ There was a philosophy department teaching the philosophy program until 2005. Griffith offers postgraduate research higher degrees, presently without an associated philosophy major (at undergraduate level), nor a discipline specific academic staff grouping.

Victoria

- Discipline of Philosophy, School of Behavioural and Social Sciences and Humanities, [University of Ballarat](#)
- Philosophy, School of International and Political Studies, [Deakin University](#)
- Philosophy, School of Communication, Arts and Critical Inquiry, [La Trobe University](#)
- Philosophy and Bioethics, School of Philosophical, Historical & International Studies, [Monash University](#)⁴
- Philosophy and Cultural Inquiry, Faculty of Life and Social Sciences, [Swinburne University of Technology](#)
- Philosophy, School of Philosophy, Anthropology and Social Sciences, [University of Melbourne](#)

Western Australia

- Philosophy Program, School of Social Sciences and Humanities, [Murdoch University](#)
- Discipline of Philosophy, Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences, [University of Western Australia](#)

Multi-State

- School of Philosophy, Faculty of Theology and Philosophy, [Australian Catholic University](#)
- Philosophy, School of Humanities and Social Sciences, [Charles Sturt University](#)
- School of Philosophy and Theology, [University of Notre Dame](#)

There are, in addition, two history and philosophy of science programs, both in NSW:

- Unit for History and Philosophy of Science, [University of Sydney](#)
- History and Philosophy of Science, School of History and Philosophy, [University of New South Wales](#).

The former is a science and arts program of history, philosophy and social studies of science and medicine, extending from a first year undergraduate unit of study to research leading to the PhD degree. Also, jointly with the Centre for Values, Ethics, and the Law in Medicine, the Unit for History and Philosophy of Science has organised a postgraduate program in Bioethics.

Philosophy programs are located in all Australian States and the Australian Capital Territory. Whilst most are located in one state, several teach across states. Almost half these programs teach at more than one campus, on average 2-3 campuses. The philosophy program at Australian Catholic University is taught to six campuses and the Newcastle philosophy program is also taught at an overseas campus (in Singapore).

Teaching in these institutions makes up 90% of the total load in philosophy units reported to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). For further information see Selected Higher Education Statistics Student load in Philosophy in the [datasets](#) section.

⁴ Monash Philosophy and Bioethics became part of a new School in 2010.

In addition, at another 13 Higher Education Providers, Philosophy is taught as a unit of study only (and sometimes intermittently) in the pursuit of other majors or degrees without a Philosophy Department or group of academic philosophers: Victoria University; Sydney Institute of Business and Technology⁵; Edith Cowan University⁶; Queensland University of Technology⁷; RMIT; Southern Cross University; University of SA, University of Technology, Sydney. Some load is listed for: Campion Institute Limited, NSW; Central Queensland University; Charles Darwin University; College (NSW) Inc; and The Southern School of Natural Therapies VIC, however this is minimal. Teaching at these Higher Education Providers makes up approximately 10% of the total load in philosophy units reported to the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR). For further information see Selected Higher Education Statistics Student load in Philosophy in the [datasets](#) section.

Philosophy (as a coded unit) is not taught (at all at undergraduate level) at the following Higher Education Providers, all of which offer a Bachelor of Arts: Avondale College; Curtin University of Technology; James Cook University; The University of Southern Queensland; and the University of the Sunshine Coast.

Definitions

The Report makes use of the term "academic program" to refer to the breadth of philosophy units offered by an institution. This will include an integrated sequence of studies at award course levels through to PhD, starting with a major, as well as service teaching units. A program comprises the full suite of philosophy units available at a University and so is normally larger than a major. Not all institutions that teach philosophy units offer a program in philosophy or have an academic organisational unit for philosophy. In a number of institutions philosophy is offered as a unit of study, without possible award course progression, and without a dedicated discipline staff. Some institutions are a hybrid—for example Griffith, which offers postgraduate research higher degrees, presently without an associated philosophy major (at undergraduate level), nor a discipline specific academic staff grouping.

For further information on terms used throughout this Report see the Glossary of terms in the [Final Project Report](#).

Limitations

In some Universities academics trained as philosophers may be employed outside of a Philosophy Department or Faculty of Arts. They may, for example, teach business ethics in a Commerce Faculty, or philosophy of education in an Education Faculty. It became obvious for these reasons that we would not be able to provide, in this report, a comprehensive account of either philosophy units taught in Australian universities or of philosophers teaching in Australian universities. Nor does the Report cover History and Philosophy of Science programs, or philosophy in Research centres. The focus of this report is primarily philosophy taught as part of a program of philosophy study by academics employed in an academic organisation unit (e.g. a Philosophy Department) that includes a number of academic philosophers.

⁵ Taught by the philosophy department at Macquarie University.

⁶ There was a philosophy major from 1993-2006.

⁷ There was a humanities program until the end of 2008.

APPENDIX 1: LIST OF INSTITUTIONS THAT REPORT PHILOSOPHY UNITS TO DEEWR⁸

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

⁸ 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](#)
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