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August 5, 2026

Principal, Prof. Nigel Seaton (NSeaton001@dundee.ac.uk)

Vice-Principal, Prof. Jeff Blackford (JBlackford001@dundee.ac.uk)

Humanities Lead, Dr. Murray Frame (m.frame@dundee.ac.uk)

Members of Senate (senateadmin@dundee.ac.uk)

University of Dundee

Dear Principal Seaton, Vice-Principal Blackford, Dr. Frame, and Senators:

We write as chair of the board of officers and executive director of the American Philosophical Association, the largest scholarly society of philosophers in North America, representing more than 6,000 members. Alongside our colleagues at the British Philosophical Association and the Society for Women in Philosophy UK, we urge you and all involved in making vital decisions about the future of the University of Dundee to preserve and support your philosophy program.

In its statements on identity, purpose, and values, the University of Dundee states its intent to “reinvigorate and enhance our competitive strengths in ... humanities to meet contemporary challenges, both local and global, in addressing social problems and in meeting the needs of the employment market.” It would be difficult to argue that the university is fulfilling its stated commitments were it to eliminate its philosophy degree program.

Philosophy is an absolutely [core liberal arts discipline](#), dedicated to critical thinking, clear communication, and ethical reasoning. More than perhaps any other discipline, philosophy prepares students to be engaged, well-rounded citizens and leaders with exactly the skills that the university aims to cultivate.

In addition to those general reasons, the philosophy department at Dundee provides powerful specific reasons to retain the philosophy degree. The philosophy degree program at UD is distinctive, offering one of just two Art and Philosophy joint honors degrees in the UK—and exceedingly few in the entire world. Moreover, Dundee is the only philosophy program in Scotland specializing in continental philosophy. As home to the Scottish Centre for Continental Philosophy, it has attracted partnerships with institutions in the US and become a sought-after program for students and faculty both within and beyond Scotland. And Dundee’s philosophy program is also a leader in gender equity, recruiting women at a ratio of roughly three to one over men—well above the national averages in [the UK](#) and [the US](#). If the philosophy degree is eliminated, these unique opportunities and relationships will come to an end, doing a further disservice to Dundee’s students and its community.

Further, in terms of market value and equipping students with skills employers desire, philosophy is perhaps the best humanities major a student could choose. Philosophy teaches skills that are highly valued by employers and that are transferable as the kinds of jobs available to workers change over time: critical thinking, creative problem solving, written and oral communication, and logical analysis. Renowned investor William H. Miller recently invested [\\$75 million in Johns Hopkins University's philosophy program](#), saying, "I attribute much of my business success to the analytical training and habits of mind that were developed when I was a graduate student [in philosophy] at Johns Hopkins." Miller's conviction based on his own experience is backed up by general data about employment and professional success. And Amanda Askell, head of the personality alignment team at AI company Anthropic, is just one example of the success of Dundee's own philosophy graduates and the contributions they make to the workforce and society more broadly.

A philosophy major or minor is a classic gateway to a career in law, and philosophy majors routinely outperform nearly all other majors on the LSAT, GRE, and GMAT. According to Payscale.com, those with a BA in philosophy have the [highest pay over time of all humanities majors](#), significantly outranking disciplines such as English literature and history. Philosophy majors' mid-career earning potential is ahead of majors in many fields outside the humanities, including biology, psychology, political science, and business. [The New York Times](#) and [The Economist](#) have recently reported that philosophy majors are currently in particular demand, and [Times Higher Education](#) reports that philosophy and AI courses and degree pathways are increasingly popular. At a time when career outcomes are so important to students and parents, and when philosophy degrees and courses are in increasing demand, it is unwise to disinvest in your philosophy program.

We understand that numerical metrics such as majors or cost are often used to make decisions about institutional priorities, but such metrics significantly undervalue what your philosophy program offers. Dundee's philosophy degree is offered in the historical context of the Scottish MA, with many joint honors students taking advantage of philosophy's interdisciplinarity to enhance, complement, and strengthen their studies across a wide variety of other disciplines. Eliminating the philosophy degree would therefore disadvantage students across the university.

To conclude, who better than Dundee alumni to speak to the value of the philosophy degree?

Philosophy is not a luxury subject, it is one of the foundational disciplines upon which universities were built. It teaches critical thinking, ethical reasoning, intellectual rigour and the ability to challenge assumptions. A university that cannot find a place for philosophy risks losing sight of its purpose and becoming little more than a training provider. Closing Philosophy at Dundee would be a loss not only to the institution, but to Scottish higher education as a whole. (Amanda Whitehead)

The Philosophy department provides an outstanding education unique to Dundee University. This would be a terrible loss to the Arts & Humanities at our university. (Eleanor Oliver)

I completed my PhD from this department in 2015 and have such fond memories of the students and community. Would be terrible for the students at Dundee to not have the option to study the most foundational subject in the humanities. (Michael Burns)



As someone who wasn't majoring in Philosophy when I started at Dundee, and now doing a joint honours with a philosophy dissertation, it's a shame that future students might not get to discover their skills in and love for philosophy by interacting with the discipline alongside the help of the amazing team who have assisted me and others during our time at the Uni. (Logan McKay)

For the sake of your mission, your students, and your community, we strongly urge you and all leaders at the University of Dundee to preserve and support your philosophy degree program and its faculty.

Most sincerely,

Marya Schechtman, Chair, Board of Officers

Amy E. Ferrer, Executive Director

cc: Dr. Oisín Keohane (o.keohane@dundee.ac.uk), Dr. Dominic Smith (d.j.y.smith@dundee.ac.uk),
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