



Queen's University

Final Assessment Report: Executive Summary

Programs Reviewed: BA, BAH, MA, MA (Specialization in Political and Legal Thought), PhD in Philosophy

In accordance with Queen's University Quality Assurance Processes (QUQAP), this Final Assessment Report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation, internal responses and assessment of the above programs. This report identifies the significant strengths of the program, and opportunities for program improvement. It sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

An implementation plan is attached that identifies

- who will be responsible for acting on and monitoring progress on the recommendations,
- any resource or governance implications resulting from the recommendations, and
- timelines for implementation of the recommendations.

Summary of Review

- 1) The department's self-study was reviewed by the Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science, Vice-Provost and Dean, School of Graduate Studies and the Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning). It was approved on 17 February 2017.
- 2) The review team visit took place on 23-24 March 2017. The review team members were
 - i. Dr. Mark McCullagh, University of Guelph
 - ii. Dr. Sergio Tenenbaum, University of Toronto
 - iii. Dr. David Pugh, Queen's University
- 3) The visit included a tour of facilities and meetings with
 - i. Students (undergraduate and graduate)
 - ii. Faculty
 - iii. Staff
 - iv. Cognate Heads of Departments
 - v. Associate Deans, Faculty of Arts and Science
 - vi. Vice-Provost and Dean and Associate Dean, School of Graduate Studies
 - vii. Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning)
- 4) The review team reported on 7 April 2017. Responses to the review team report were provided by the Head of the Department of Philosophy, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science and the Vice-Provost and Dean, School of Graduate Studies.

- 5) The Senate Cyclical Program Review Committee considered all the documentation at its meeting on 12 June 2017, and reported to the Provost on the programs' strengths, opportunities for enhancement, and recommendations for improvement.

The following strengths were noted:

- Very high quality graduate program. Noteworthy are interdisciplinary initiatives such as the Political and Legal Thought option in the MA program.
- International stature in graduate programming in areas of strength such as Political Philosophy, Applied Ethics, Feminist Philosophy and Ethics.
- International stature in some research areas.
- Commitment to excellence in teaching at the undergraduate level.
- A wide variety of course offerings and an increasing number of courses that deal with contemporary issues.

The following opportunities for enhancement were noted:

- Changes to the manner in which undergraduate courses are planned and how teaching assignments are made.
- Review of the undergraduate curriculum.
- Strategic increase in faculty member complement to ensure the Department can maintain its excellent undergraduate and graduate programming.
- Enhance the undergraduate student experience by improving the culture of the Department (e.g. more interaction between undergraduate and graduate students).

The academic programs in the Department of Philosophy have been approved to continue.

Date of next review: 2024-2025.

Prepared by Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning)

June 27, 2017



Implementation Plan

Recommendations	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-up	Responsibility for providing Resources	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
1. Reviewers recommend that graduate students be removed from the unpleasant and unsafe offices in the basement of Watson Hall; instead of trying to improve the basement spaces, the Department should find alternative modern, safe arrangements on campus where the graduate students can all be together.	Meet with Campus Planning to outline needs and identify new space.	Department Head in conjunction with Associate Dean, Arts and Science	Human resources to be provided by Department	Summer 2018
2. Reviewers recommend that the Department offer a professionalization seminar of some kind and that they appoint a placement officer.	In the coming academic year, department to participate in the established Expanding Horizons programs. In addition, partner with cognate units to provide	Department Head in conjunction with Associate Dean, Arts and Science and Associate Dean, School of Graduate Studies	Human resources to be provided by Department	Winter 2018

	Recommendations	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-up	Responsibility for providing Resources	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
		Philosophy students with discipline-specific events. Appointment of a placement officer to be discussed at Board of Graduate Studies.			
3.	Reviewers recommend that the Department invest in TA training either by holding an orientation at the start of each year concerning things that arise in all courses, by encouraging individual instructors to devote adequate time to training and guiding their TAs, or some other effort(s). Training time should be paid time since it is part of what is involved in doing the job, specific to philosophy.	Department to hold a Philosophy-specific, compulsory training session for all Teaching Assistants. One option is to engage the CTL Educational Development Associates to assist with the training.	Department Head in conjunction with Associate Dean, Arts and Science and Associate Dean School of Graduate Studies	Human resources to be provided by Department	Implemented for 2017/18 academic year
4.	Reviewers recommend that there be at least some part-time help for the staff to address the “neglected maintenance,” so to speak, in the administration of the department, which has become even more of an issue	Continue discussions between Department Head and Administrative Staff to determine the extent of the need for increased support	Department Head in conjunction with Associate Dean Arts and Science	Human resources to be provided by Department	Ongoing

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<p>due to the recent addition of the new MA in PLT.</p>				
<p>5. Both graduate and undergraduate students raised diversity concerns in several respects: faculty demographics, student demographics, curricular design, and the content of individual course offerings. Reviewers recommend that the Department address these issues by taking steps such as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conducting an annual inventory of course readings from underrepresented groups • Conducting an annual “climate” survey of the graduate students • Clarifying procedures by which equity-addressing proposals coming from graduate students can be taken up by the department • Reminding course instructors to devote some lecture time at the start of large courses to giving guidance on 	<p>Collate data on course readings with an eye toward diversity; Survey graduate students; continue dialogue between Equity and Women’s Concerns Committee and the Philosophy Grad Student Association; Encourage instructors to include policy on respectful behaviour to appear on all course outlines;</p>	<p>Department Head in conjunction with Associate Dean, Arts and Science and Associate Dean, School of Graduate Studies</p>	<p>Human resources provided by Department</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Recommendations	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-up	Responsibility for providing Resources	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
students' dealings with the teaching assistants				
<p>6. Reviewers recommend that the Department review their undergraduate curriculum and consider some of the following suggestions as reasonable and fairly easy ways to improve the undergraduate program:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve the process by which course offerings are planned, such as the Department committing itself to a skeleton of scheduled course offerings over a two-year span (e.g., course X is offered every even-numbered Fall). • Split each (or at least two, if some faculty are committed to teach a year-long course on their own) of the year-long first-year courses into two separate half-year courses. • Offer fewer, larger (>200) first-year courses, which will free up faculty resources 	Initiate discussion with Undergraduate Chair and Coordinator of Graduate Studies around system for planning course offerings over both the short-term and long-term	Department Head in conjunction with Associate Dean Arts and Science	Human resources provided by Department	Ongoing

Recommendations	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-up	Responsibility for providing Resources	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
<p>to enhance course offerings at higher levels.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shift the Logic course to second year, which would better prepare students for later courses. • Highlight one of the Department's impressive strengths by create a greater presence of Political Philosophy in the department. 				
<p>7. They strongly recommend that future hires also help to rebuild the department's range of expertise. The following areas of contemporary research are those in which the department has either no coverage from regular faculty or very little: major areas of the History of Philosophy (e.g., Kant, Plato, Aristotle, 18th and 19th century Philosophy); Philosophy of Mind; Philosophy of Language).</p>	<p>Department Head to work with the Associate Dean Arts and Science towards this goal</p>	<p>Department Head in conjunction with Associate Dean, Arts and Science</p>	<p>Human resources provided by Department</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Recommendations	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-up	Responsibility for providing Resources	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
<p>8. Reviewers recommend the following initiatives as means to improve the undergraduate student experience:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Designate a Faculty member to be the Faculty liaison with the Undergraduate Philosophy Club b) Encourage and facilitate more interaction between undergraduate and graduate students c) Offer resources to students to improve their Philosophy writing skills d) Support midterm student evaluations of courses 	<p>Initiate discussion with Undergraduate Chair and Coordinator of Graduate Studies. For recommendation 8 c) contact the Writing Centre to craft in-house training specific for the department.</p>	<p>Department Head</p>	<p>Human resources provided by Department</p>	<p>Completion by Fall 2018</p>
<p>9. Reviewers recommend that the University fund the first-rate international applicants that the program attracts. This will benefit not only those international students, but also the students already in the department's programs through exposure to and dialogue with students from other countries. Moreover it would contribute to</p>	<p>Develop action plan with School of Graduate Studies</p>	<p>Department Head in conjunction with Associate Dean, Arts and Science and Associate Dean, School of Graduate Studies</p>	<p>Human resources provided by Department</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>

Recommendations	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-up	Responsibility for providing Resources	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
<p>building the international reputation of the department and the University.</p>				
<p>10. Reviewers recommend that the department implement one or both of the following initiatives to improve graduate student funding:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Offer more support to students traveling to conferences to give talks. • Encourage Faculty to apply for more grants (including by providing them incentives in terms of seed funds and funds for proposals that were classified as “4A” by SSHRC) and create a culture in which Faculty routinely use a significant portion of their grants to support graduate students 	<p>Initiate discussions between Department and School of Graduate Studies</p>	<p>Department Head in conjunction with Associate Dean, School of Graduate Studies</p>	<p>Human resources provided by Department</p>	<p>Ongoing</p>
<p>11. The SCPRC recommends that the department complete a curriculum review of all its undergraduate and graduate</p>	<p>Initiate discussions between Department and Centre for Teaching and Learning</p>	<p>Department Head in conjunction with Associate Dean, Arts and Science and</p>	<p>Human resources provided by Department</p>	<p>Completion by Fall 2018</p>

Recommendations	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-up	Responsibility for providing Resources	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
<p>programs in consultation with the Centre for Teaching and Learning. The aim of the review should be to clearly articulate learning outcomes and create a comprehensive and cohesive curriculum plan that ensures all decisions made about course offerings are grounded in best practices in teaching and learning.</p>		<p>Associate Dean, School of Graduate Studies</p>		

The Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science and the Vice-Provost and Dean School of Graduate Studies shall be responsible for monitoring the implementation plan. The details of progress made will be presented in writing to the Provost and Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning) and filed in the Office of the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic). Monitoring reports will be posted on the university web site.

Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan

September 11, 2017

Approval Date

Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning)



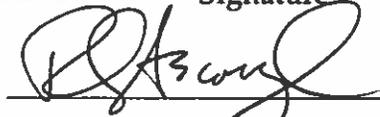
Signature

**Vice-Provost and Dean School of Graduate
Studies**



Signature

Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science



Signature

**Final status of the Academic Programs in the
Department of Philosophy**

Approved to Continue

Date of next program review

2024/25 Academic Year