

**Queen's University**  
**Executive Summary of the Review of the Academic Programs in the Department of History**

In accordance with Queen's University Quality Assurance Processes (QUQAP), the Department of History submitted a self-study on May 21, 2014 to the Faculty of Arts and Science, the School of Graduate Studies and the Office of the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) to initiate the cyclical program review of its undergraduate and graduate programs. The approved self-study presented program descriptions, learning outcomes, library report and analyses of data provided by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning and the School of Graduate Studies. Appendices to the self-study contained CVs for each full-time member in the Department of History and the library report.

Three arm's-length reviewers (Steven Zdatny, Professor, University of Vermont; Elizabeth Elbourne, Associate Professor, McGill University; and, John Pierce, Professor, Queen's University) examined the materials and conducted a site visit on October 30-31, 2014. The site visit included interviews with the vice-provost (teaching and learning), vice-provost and dean and associate dean School of Graduate Studies, dean and associate dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science and meetings with the department chair, heads of cognate units, teaching fellows, post-doctoral fellows, students, staff and faculty.

In their report (January 23, 2015), the review team provided feedback that describes how the Department of History's programs meet the QUQAP evaluation criteria and are consistent with the university's mission and academic priorities. The review team noted that the Department of History is a strong department that is clearly performing at a high level under solid leadership and within an environment of good morale. The review report also highlighted the highly productive tenure-track faculty, the impressive support staff and the rigorous, vibrant and healthy graduate programs.

The review team did report on a number of challenges including: low TA hours; reliance on non-tenured/tenure-track instructors; lack of middle-sized lecture courses; and, a difficult job market for graduate students.

Based on all of the above documentation, a *Final Assessment Report* and an *Implementation Plan* were prepared by the vice-provost (teaching and learning) and approved by the provost (August 19, 2015).

The academic programs in the Department of History have been approved to continue and are scheduled for their next review in eight years (2022-2023)

Prepared by the vice-provost (teaching and learning)

September 8, 2015

## **Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan for the Cyclical Program Review of the Academic Programs in the Department of History**

In accordance with Queen's University Quality Assurance Processes (QUQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response and assessments of the undergraduate and graduate programs delivered by the Department of History. This report identifies the significant strengths of the programs, together with opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, and it sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.

The report includes an implementation plan that identifies who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the final assessment report; who will be responsible for providing any resources entailed by those recommendations; any changes in organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations; who will be responsible for acting on those recommendations; and, timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.

### **Summary of the Cyclical Program Review of the Academic Programs in the Department of History**

The Department of History submitted a self-study on May 21, 2014 to the Faculty of Arts and Science, the School of Graduate Studies and the Office of the Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic) to initiate the cyclical program review of its undergraduate and graduate programs. The self-study presented the program descriptions and learning outcomes, an analytical assessment of the academic programs, and program data including the data collected by the Office of Institutional Research and Planning and the School of Graduate Studies. Appended to the self-study were a number of documents including CVs for each member of Department of History and the library report.

Two arm's-length external reviewers (Steven Zdatny, Professor, University of Vermont and Elizabeth Elbourne, Associate Professor, McGill University), and one arm's length internal reviewer (John Pierce, Professor, Department of English, Queen's University) were selected by the vice-provost (teaching and learning) in consultation with the dean of Arts and Science and the vice-provost and dean School of Graduate Studies from nominations submitted by the Department of History. The review team evaluated the self-study documentation and then conducted a site visit to Queen's on October 30-31, 2014. The site visit included interviews with the vice-provost (teaching and learning), vice-provost and dean and associate dean School of Graduate Studies, dean and associate dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science and meetings with the department chair, heads of cognate units, teaching fellows, post-doctoral fellows, students, staff and faculty.

In their report (January 23, 2015), the review team provided feedback that describes how the Department of History's programs meet the QUQAP evaluation criteria and are consistent with the university's mission and academic priorities. The review team noted that the Department of History was committed to providing a rich and valuable student learning experience. In particular, the review team noted that History is a strong department that is clearly performing at a high level under solid leadership and within an environment of good morale. The review report also highlighted the highly productive tenure-track faculty, the impressive support staff and the rigorous, vibrant and healthy graduate program.

The review team did report on a number of challenges including: low TA hours; reliance on non-tenured/tenure-track instructors; lack of middle-sized lecture courses; and, a difficult job market for graduate students.

The chair of the department, after consultation with faculty and staff in the department, submitted a response to the review team report (February 24, 2015). The vice-provost and dean of the School of Graduate Studies (March 2, 2015) and the associate dean of the Faculty of Arts and Science (March 17, 2015) also submitted their responses to the provost's office. Specific recommendations were discussed, and clarifications and corrections presented.

Subsequent to receipt of the review team report and the internal responses from the department, the associate dean of Arts and Science and the vice-provost and dean of Graduate Studies, the senate cyclical program review committee (SCPRC) dedicated part of its meetings of April 14 and May 12, 2015 to this particular discussion.

The SCPRC would like to recognize the following strengths of the Department of History:

- Accomplished faculty with excellent publication records, robust research programs and notable teaching records;
- High quality staff that are engaged and invested in their students;
- Enthusiastic and motivated students;
- Developing quality programs that demonstrate innovative disciplinary modelling around knowledge and skills acquisition, critical thinking, problem solving, and student engagement;
- Providing an enriched student learning experience that incorporates: excellent opportunities for hands-on experiential learning; good internal program of external and internal speakers (funded by the Nugent grant); and, teaching opportunities for graduate students.

The SCPRC would like to identify the following opportunities for enhancement. The department should seek to:

- Adapt the undergraduate curriculum to an environment of increased enrolment and decreasing resources, including an evaluation of the department's investment in the seminar system;

- Increase participation of core faculty in academic advising of undergraduate students;
- Forge stronger partnerships with cognate disciplines to foster interdisciplinary programming and effective use of resources;
- Encourage students to participate in study abroad opportunities;
- Expand the breadth and diversity in the curriculum, including the 300 and 400-level seminars, through new hires;
- Improve times-to-completion for PhD program;
- Increase the number and/or workload of teaching assistants;
- Improve language training opportunities for graduate students;
- Attract a more diverse graduate applicant pool;
- Enhance non-academic skills development for graduate students.

### **Summary of the Reviewers' Recommendations with the Associate Dean, Arts and Science's Response**

#### **Undergraduate Curriculum**

The review team suggested a number of recommendations associated with the undergraduate curriculum including diversification of undergraduate courses and adding more advisors from the ranks of its tenured and tenure-track faculty.

*The associate dean responded that the department has been diligent in revising its curriculum and seeking innovative ways to provide pedagogically-sound alternatives that will enhance the student learning experience, as well as maintaining the academic integrity of the study of history (e.g., developing online and blended courses, and the unique seminar system). The response went on to say that the department is to be commended for developing a curriculum that demonstrates innovative disciplinary modelling around knowledge and skills acquisition, critical thinking, problem solving, and student engagement.*

### **Summary of the Reviewers' Recommendations with the Vice-Provost and Dean, School of Graduate Studies' Response**

#### **Graduate Fields**

The review team recommended that the department, graduate students and the School of Graduate Studies have a discussion about the definitions and uses of fields and that expectations be aligned.

*The vice-provost and dean responded that the School of Graduate Studies agrees that if the department wishes to declare fields of study that the field names, descriptions and number should be reviewed to align with the graduate program's strengths and faculty expertise. Ideally the descriptions should coincide with the "fields" associated with the comprehensive requirements.*

### **Language Training**

The review team recommended that the department and the university seek ways to enable and fund appropriate language training as needed, possibly including funding students to attend intensive courses off-campus.

*The vice-provost and dean responded that the limited language training opportunities are not unique to the Department of History and indeed not to Queen's. Partnering with other units and institutions may provide cost-effective solutions.*

### Implementation Plan:

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-up	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
<p>1. As noted by the review team, the Department of History has a unique undergraduate curriculum that requires students to take a substantial number of seminars. In their report, the review team describes the curriculum map as a "...buffet, rather than a highly organized meal". To ensure that the current mix of large introductory courses, several small seminar courses and a few small-size lecture courses is the optimal balance for achieving the programs' stated learning outcomes, the SCPRC recommends that the department complete a curriculum review of all of its undergraduate programs in consultation with the Centre for Teaching and Learning. The aim of the review should be to create a comprehensive and cohesive curriculum plan that ensures all decisions made about course offerings, number of seminars, class size and modes of delivery are grounded in best practices in teaching and learning.</p>	<p>A curriculum mapping of all courses to DLEs, LOs and other indicators of achievement</p>	<p>Chair, Department of History and associate dean (Arts and Science)</p>	<p>Dean of Arts and Science's <i>annual report</i> to the provost 2016</p>

2. The Department of History, in conjunction with the School of Graduate Studies, should review the descriptions and requirements associated with the identified fields of study to ensure that field names, descriptions and number align with the graduate program's strength and faculty expertise. If the department decides to delete a current graduate field and/or proposes to add a new graduate field, the Queen's University Quality Assurance processes ( <u>QUQAP</u> ) must be followed.	Initiate meeting with department chair and relevant associate dean, School of Graduate Studies	Chair, Department of History and associate dean (SGS)	Vice-Provost and Dean, School of Graduate Studies' <i>annual report</i> to the provost 2016
3. SCPRC shares students' concerns that letters of recommendation for graduate school applications are being provided by teaching fellows and do not hold the same weight as letters from regular members of faculty. Therefore, it is recommended that the department work with their relative associate dean(s) to provide a business case on how to provide undergraduate students with more access to regular tenured and tenured-track staff.	Initiate meeting with department chair and relevant associate dean (Arts and Science)	Chair, Department of History and associate dean (Arts and Science)	Dean of Arts and Science's <i>annual report</i> to the provost 2016

The vice-provost and dean School of Graduate Studies and the dean of Arts and Science shall be responsible for monitoring the implementation plan. The details of progress made will be presented in the deans' annual reports 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 16 2015**

**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 academic programs in the Department of Gender Studies**

**Approved to Continue**

**Date of next program review**

**2022/2023 Academic year**