

Queen's University
Executive Summary of the Review of the Department of Political Studies

In accordance with Queen's University Quality Assurance Processes (QUQAP), the department of political studies submitted a self-study document on January 20, 2016 to the faculty of arts and science, 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 [BA, BAH, MA and PhD]. 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 core faculty in the Department of Political Studies and the library report.

Three arm's-length reviewers (Caroline Andrew, School of Political Studies and Director of the Centre on Governance, University of Ottawa; Richard Stubbs, Professor, Political Science, McMaster University; and, David Parker, Associate Professor, Department of History, Queen's University) examined the materials and conducted a site visit on March 10 and 11, 2016. The site visit included interviews with the vice-provost (teaching and learning), vice-provost and dean and associate dean of the school of graduate studies, dean and associate dean of arts and science and meetings with cognate heads, librarian, post-doctoral fellow, undergraduate and graduate students, staff and faculty.

In their report (March 21, 2016), the review team provided feedback that describes how the department of political studies meets the QUQAP evaluation criteria and are consistent with the university's mission and academic priorities. The review team noted the vibrant research culture in the department and highlighted the striking success of graduate students in securing large external awards and in pursuing successful careers in multiple areas. The review team also commended the department for its commitment to assigning full-time senior professors to teach the first-year undergraduate course.

The reviewers did recommend that in order to ensure consistency in marking papers and exams that involve teaching assistants that a marking guide/rubric should be distributed. The reviewers also remarked that the strong MA program may be enhanced by assigning supervisors of Master's Research Papers in the first term, rather than requiring students to find their own supervisor.

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 (July 15, 2016).

The academic programs in the Department of Political Studies have been approved to continue and are scheduled for their next review in eight years (2023-2024).

Prepared by the vice-provost (teaching and learning)

July 11, 2016

Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan for the Cyclical Program Review of the Department of Political Studies

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 [BA, BAH, MA and PhD] delivered by the department of political studies. 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 Political Studies

The department of political studies submitted a self-study document to the faculty of arts and science, school of graduate studies and the office of the provost and vice-principal (academic) on January 20, 2016. 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. Appendices to the self-study contained CVs for each core faculty in the department of political studies and the library report.

Two arm's-length external reviewers (Caroline Andrew, School of Political Studies and Director of the Centre on Governance, University of Ottawa and Richard Stubbs, Professor, Political Science, McMaster University) and one arm's-length internal reviewer (David Parker, Associate Professor, Department of History, Queen's University) were selected by the vice-provost (teaching and learning) in consultation with the deans of arts and science and the school of graduate studies, from nominations submitted by the department of political studies. The review team evaluated the self-study documentation and then conducted a site visit to Queen's on March 10 and 11, 2016. The site visit included interviews with the vice-provost (teaching and learning), vice-provost and dean and associate dean of the school of graduate studies, dean and associate dean of arts and science and meetings with cognate heads, librarian, post-doctoral fellow, undergraduate and graduate students, staff and faculty.

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The acting head, after consultation with faculty and staff in the program, submitted a response to the review team report (March 23, 2016). The associate dean of arts and science (April 25, 2016) and the dean of the school of graduate studies (April 15, 2016) 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 faculty and the dean of graduate studies, the senate cyclical program review committee (SCPRC) dedicated its meeting of May 3, 2016 to this particular discussion.

The SCPRC would like to recognize the following strengths of the department of political studies:

- Accomplished faculty with excellent publication records, robust research programs and notable teaching records;
- Enthusiastic, motivated and highly qualified students;
- Excellent, highly employable graduates;
- Innovative new courses and programs.

The SCPRC identified the following opportunities for enhancement. The department is encouraged to:

- Emphasize the development undergraduate research skills;
- Increase interaction between undergraduate students and core faculty;
- Leverage the professional development and academic skills building workshops and modules offered by the School of Graduate Studies;
- Better orientate all TAs in Political Studies including expectations around grading;
- Create standardized reading lists for fields in order to provide consistency and transparency for field exams.

Summary of the Reviewer's Comments/Recommendations with the Internal Responses

Undergraduate Program

The review team recommended that consideration be given to dividing the first-year course into two semester-length courses.

The department of political studies responded that members of the department have considered splitting POLS 110 into two half-year courses for a number of years and remain divided on a decision. This recommendation will be debated again in the coming academic year.

The review team recommended that POLS 385 Quantitative Approaches to Political Studies should be taught by the department of mathematics and statistics with tutorials oriented to political studies topics and methodologies.

The department of political studies responded that it made sense for the department to rely on the math department for service teaching of statistics, with tutorials suitably tailored to political science needs.

The faculty office responded that the recommendation was a welcome one and that perhaps the department may be interested in pursuing the existing CDS-hosted blended statistics course tailored to students from various units (e.g. nursing, biology, geography and sociology).

Graduate Program

The review team recommended the introduction of an exit survey for MA students.

The department noted that the recommendation was non-controversial and agreed with the introduction of an exit survey.

The dean of the school of graduate studies (SGS) responded that this may duplicate the existing School of Graduate Studies exit survey that all graduate students are invited to complete upon the completion of degree requirements. The program-specific survey data may be shared if sample size permits and are provided for the purposes of cyclical program reviews. Comparisons with cognate units (in aggregate) can also be provided. The response went on to say that the School of Graduate Studies is developing processes that would allow for annual dissemination of exit survey results and that also, the province will be launching a cohort-based graduate outcomes survey this year that will provide insight about graduate students' career trajectories and satisfaction with program preparation.

Implementation Plan:

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-up	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
<p>1. To ensure that the current mix of large introductory courses, smaller-sized lecture courses and several small seminar courses is the optimal balance for achieving the programs' stated learning outcomes, the SCPRC recommends that the department complete a curriculum review of all 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, numbers of seminars, class size and modes of delivery are grounded in best practices in teaching and learning.</p>	<p>Initiate discussions with department head, relevant associate dean and centre for teaching and learning</p>	<p>Associate dean (arts and science)</p>	<p>Deans of faculty of arts and science's to the vice-provost (teaching and learning) September 2017</p>

2. To ensure that student assessment is formative and transparent, the SCPRC recommends that the department works with the centre for teaching and learning to ensure: clear assessment criteria are associated with each course; there are multiple opportunities for feedback; and, that a variety of pedagogical approaches and assessment tools are utilized.	Initiate discussions with department head, relevant associate dean and centre for teaching and learning	Associate dean (arts and science)	Deans of faculty of arts and science's report to the vice-provost (teaching and learning) September 2017
3. Implement strategies to ensure progression towards timely degree completion at the PhD level.	Initiate discussions with department head and relevant associate dean (school of graduate studies)	Associate dean (school of graduate studies)	Dean school of graduate studies' report to the vice-provost (teaching and learning) September 2017

The deans of arts and science and the school of graduate studies shall be responsible for monitoring the implementation plan. The details of progress made will be presented in writing to the 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

July 15, 2016

Approval Date

Vice-Provost (Teaching and Learning)



Signature

Dean, Arts and Science



Signature

Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies



Signature

**Final status of academic programs in the
Department of Political Studies**

Approved to Continue

Date of next program review

2023/2024 Academic year