

**Final Assessment Report**  
Submitted by SUPR-G to SCAPA

<b>Program:</b>	<b>Visual Arts</b>	
Degrees Offered:	MA, MFA, PhD	
Approved Fields:		
External Consultants:	Name, title: Anne Whitelaw, Associate Dean Research Affiliation Faculty of Fine Arts, Concordia University	Name, title: John Kissick, Professor Of Art, Past Director Affiliation: School of Fine Art and Music, University of Guelph
Internal Reviewers:	Name, title: Pam McKenzie, Associate Dean Affiliation: Faculty of Information and Media Studies	Name, title: Swati Mehta, PhD Candidate Affiliation: Health and Rehabilitation Sciences
Date of Site Visit:	March 31 and April 1 2015	
Evaluation:	<i>Good Quality</i>	
Approved by:	<i>SUPR-G on September 14, 2015</i> <i>SCAPA on September 30, 2015</i>	

**Executive Summary**

The reviewers met formally and informally with a wide variety of faculty, staff, and current students. We felt comfortable with both the breadth and depth of opinion offered and the diversity of voices heard. We were confident that opportunities were given to voice concerns as well as highlight strengths.

**Significant Strengths of Program:**

- The learning outcomes of all three programs more than fulfill the requirements of high quality graduate degrees in the visual arts.
- The external reviewers were extremely impressed by the high level of overall achievement, research expertise and dissemination, and intellectual currency of faculty members.
- The recent move to a one-year MA appears to be successful and the reviewers anticipate excellent enrolment, completion rates, and overall success.
- The MFA is a high quality professional terminal degree, and the reviewers found no concerns in either the structure or content of the program.
- The PhD offers a unique-in-Canada opportunity to specialize in Art History, Studio Practice, or a combination of the two. The opportunity to focus on research and creation over an extended period within a challenging academic milieu is a key strength of the program. PhD students are very satisfied with the intellectual guidance and support they receive.
- Although the faculty complement is small, it is of very high quality. The strength of the faculty is by far the most important resource supporting the graduate programs, and something of which the Department, the Faculty, and the University should feel extremely proud.
- Technical facilities appear adequate and well-managed, and library resources appear to be excellent.

**Suggestions for improvement & Enhancement:**

- The end-of-program critique should be reinstated in the MFA.
- The fields in the PhD no longer reflect faculty research strengths and the reviewers recommend eliminating them.

- Updates to the comprehensive exam process and reading lists, as well as more extensive written feedback, would strengthen this milestone.
- We share the faculty's concern about the possible implications of upcoming faculty retirements.
- Changes to the Beryl Ivey Visual Resources Library raise concerns about the ongoing availability of on-site assistance in the development of image banks, something the external reviewers felt was a necessity.
- It is difficult to discern the unique features of the MFA program in relation to competitor programs; consider how to differentiate it for prospective students.

**These suggestions are not required for program sustainability, and the Department Chair's report indicates that most of these have in fact already been addressed.**

<b>Recommendations required for Program sustainability:</b>	Responsibility	Resources	Timeline
Reinstate end-of-program critique in the MFA	Grad Chair		In progress
Consider advertising Western's differentiation in its MFA for recruitment	Grad Chair & Faculty		In Progress
Review impact of changes to Library resources	Grad Chair & Library Staff		In Progress