

**French Studies  
Final Assessment Report &  
Implementation Plan  
October 2020**

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| <b>Faculty / Affiliated University College</b> | Faculty of Arts & Humanities  |   |
| <b>Degrees Offered</b>                         | <b>MA</b> (3 options - course-based program, courses plus a memoire, thesis-based)<br>- <b>Course-based option is being proposed for elimination as part of this review</b><br><br><b>PhD</b>   |   |
| <b>Date of Last Review</b>                     | 2011-2012   |   |
| <b>Approved Fields</b>                         | <b>Fields to be withdrawn as part of this review:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Linguistique théorique et appliquée</li> <li>- Littérature et culture françaises modernes</li> <li>- Littérature et culture françaises prémodernes</li> <li>- Littératures et cultures québécoises et francophones</li> <li>- Théorie littéraire et culturelle et l'histoire des idées</li> </ul><br><b>New Fields as part of this review:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Literature</li> <li>- Linguistics</li> </ul> |   |
| <b>External Consultants</b>                    | Randell Gess  | Professor, Carleton University            |
| <b>Internal Reviewer</b>                       | Vincent Masse   | Associate Professor, Dalhousie University |
| <b>Date of Virtual Site Visit</b>              | Sharon Sliwinski  |   |
| <b>Date Review Report Received</b>             | Associate Dean, Faculty of Information and Media Studies  |   |
| <b>Date Program/Faculty Response Received</b>  | July 16 – July 17, 2020   |   |
| <b>Evaluation</b>                              | August 8, 2020  |   |
| <b>Approval Dates</b>                          | Program response Sept 11, 2020<br>Deans response - October 19, 2020<br><br>Good Quality   |   |
| <b>Year of Next Review</b>                     | <b>SUPR-G:</b> January 18, 2021<br><b>SCAPA:</b> February 3, 2021<br><b>Senate:</b> February 12, 2021<br><small>This section will be completed by SGPS or Associate University Secretary</small>  |   |
| <b>Year of Next Review</b>                     | Year of next cyclical review – 2027-2028  |   |

In accordance with Western's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), adopted on May 11, 2011, and revised June 22, 2012, this Final Assessment Report provides a summary of the cyclical review, internal responses and assessment and evaluation of the **French Studies Graduate Program** delivered by the **Faculty of Arts & Humanities**.

This report considers the following documents:

- the program's self-study – Volume 1 (plus supplemental proposal to eliminate course-based MA option)
- the external consultants' report
- responses to the consultants' report by the Departments and Faculty.

This Final Assessment Report identifies the strengths of the program, opportunities for program enhancement, and prioritizes the recommendations of the external consultants. The Implementation Plan details the recommendations from the Final Assessment Report that are selected for implementation, identifies who is responsible for approving and acting on the recommendations, any action or follow-up that is required, and the timeline for completion.

The Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan is sent for approval through SUPR-G and SCAPA, then for information to Senate and the Ontario Universities' Council on Quality Assurance and is made available on a publicly accessible location on Western's IQAP website.

The Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan is the only document resulting from the Graduate cyclical review process that is made public, all other documents are confidential to the Program/School/Faculty and SUPR-G.

## Executive Summary

Western's graduate programs in French Studies began at the master's level in 1950 with 276 degrees now conferred. The MA focuses on literature and linguistics and currently offers five approved fields. The Department plans to move to two fields that reflect faculty expertise and current research in the area. The new fields would be called: Literature and Linguistics. The master's program has three streams, including a course-based program, courses plus a memoire, and a thesis-based program. The course-based option is being eliminated as part of this review

The French Department was approved to offer Ph.D. program in 1968 and more than 100 degrees have been conferred. The Department indicates that it prepares its doctoral graduates primarily for academic positions and graduates of French Studies now hold academic positions in most universities across Canada and around the world.

The curriculum for graduate study focusses on interdisciplinary learning in literature and linguistics. The graduate programs are enhanced with the inclusion of graduate faculty from the departments of Comparative Literature, Hispanic Studies, Visual Arts, Women's Studies and Feminist Research, and Classics.

Courses are cross-listed to combine master's and doctoral students so that the doctoral students have opportunity to mentor the master's students which helps both groups develop critical thinking and communication skills.

As a critical component of this cyclical review, the Graduate Faculty took the opportunity to review and consider renewal of their program. To inform the self-study, the Graduate Studies Chair involved faculty in retreats and meetings to discuss both the *status quo* and opportunities going forward in light of declining faculty numbers. Current students and alumni were included in questionnaires for feedback that informed the self-study process.

### **Strengths/Innovative Features of the Program** (as identified in the Program Brief)

- Formal co-tutelle and dual-degree agreements with prestigious French universities that allow students to study in both institutions and receive two doctoral degrees simultaneously
- A member of the Transitional Justice and Post-Conflict Reconstruction Collaborative Program that provides exceptional diverse and experiential learning for students.
- Strong connection with Linguistics graduate program.
- Interdisciplinary connections that allow students to gain unique educational exposure and valuable academic experiences through collaborative links with other programs within the Faculty of Arts and Humanities as well as elsewhere on campus.
- Students language and arts skills that have been strengthened through their involvement with theatre. In 2002-2003, students in French Studies created the troupe

Théâtre L'On Donne that hosts an annual production that played on the McManus stage at the Grand Theatre in London.

- Hours of pedagogical workshops to support TAs.
- Clearly delineated and focussed Learning Outcomes that foster student learning
- Internal and external graduate student travel awards for research purposes and to present work at conferences.

**Areas of Concern Identified** (identified in the program brief)

- Concern for attrition of faculty numbers

**Review Process**

During the external review, the committee, comprised of the two external reviewers, one internal reviewer and a doctoral student, were provided with Volume I (plus supplemental proposal) and II in advance of their visit and then met over two days with the

- Vice Provost and Associate Vice Provost, School of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies
- Vice Provost, Academic Planning, Policy and Faculty
- Dean and Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities
- Graduate Chairs – both outgoing and incoming
- Department Chair – both outgoing and incoming
- Graduate Faculty
- Graduate Students
- Graduate Program Assistants
- Associate Chief Librarian

Following the onsite review, the external reviewers submitted a comprehensive report of their findings which was sent to the Graduate Chair and the Dean for review and response.

These formative documents, including Volumes I and II of the Self-Study, the External Report, the program response and the Dean's response, have formed the basis of this summative assessment report, collated and submitted to SGPS and the Senate Graduate Program Review Committee (SUPR-G) by the Internal Reviewer.

**Summative Assessment – External Reviewers' Report**

The reviewers' comment that the program continues to be highly successful and note:

*The Department has much to be commended and is of high quality.*

*The French graduate programs at Western... are impressively large for a non-Francophone environment, and doing quite well – better, in fact, than many comparable programs in other Canadian institutions.*

## Strengths of the Program

- Clearly delineated Learning Outcomes across master's and doctoral programs
  - Structure of the program aligns with Learning Outcomes
- "Highly competent" faculty
  - with research specializations that attract students to Western
  - active and respected researchers
  - excellent supervision practices
  - *Faculty members are active and productive researchers, who promote innovation and foster an appropriate intellectual climate.*
- Excellent students
- Co-tutelle arrangements

## Areas of Concern Identified

- Realigning the first two years of the doctoral program to support timely program completion and communication
- Create individual and appropriate structures for linguistics and language streams to accommodate difference
- Faculty gaps in applied linguistic specialist, Quebec literature, Indigenous writers

## Program Changes to be approved as part of the cyclical review program

### **1. Course-based MA being eliminated- approved as part of this review**

The French Graduate Program wishes to eliminate the course-only MA option comprised of eight (0.5-credit) courses. Since 2014, only a single student was admitted to the course-only MA. No student is currently enrolled in a course-only MA in French Studies, the proposed elimination of this option will not negatively affect any students.

### **2. Fields being revised from 5 fields to 2 two fields**

#### **Previous**

1. Linguistique théorique et appliquée
2. Littérature et culture françaises modernes
3. Littérature et culture françaises prémodernes
4. Littératures et cultures québécoises et francophones
5. Théorie littéraire et culturelle et l'histoire des idées

#### **NEW (approved as part of this review)**

1. Literature
2. Linguistics
- 3.

## Recommendations from Program Review

The following recommendations were received:

| Reviewers' Recommendation   | Program/Faculty Response   |
|---|--|
| <p>1. The Department should carry on its current structural modifications to the first two years of the PhD program, including crucially its reform of the <i>examens de synthèse</i>, which would likely benefit from being divided into Literature and Linguistics.</p> | <p>In process with completion in Fall 2021</p> <p>A solid action plan has been established by the Graduate Chair to ensure the continuity of the ongoing work. The Graduate Studies Committee will also give separate examinations for its two programs.</p>   |
| <p>2. The Department should extend its current structural modifications regarding PhD milestones to years 3 and 4 of the program, with an emphasis on communication with continuing students.</p>   | <p>In Process with completion in 2021</p> <p>The full implementation in the upcoming months of SGPS' student online platform <i>Pathfinder</i> will assist supervising committee members in monitoring students' progress and by making administrative procedures more transparent to students.</p>  |
| <p>3. The Department should modify its <i>Research Methods and Professionalization</i> seminar, as an important feature of the program, whose objectives should include the imparting of practical tips and knowledge, as well as supporting the cohort experience.</p>   | <p>Agreed</p>  |
| <p>4. Recognize that the above-average completion time for PhD students is neither a straightforward "problem", nor is its solution "straightforward".</p>  | <p>In Process and ongoing</p> <p>The Department acknowledges that the four-year completion time set for a PhD program in Arts and Humanities is challenging and will continue to be attentive to student's financial needs through funding alternatives past the fifth year such as internal bursary programs and various research assistantships.</p> |
| <p>5. Better communication on the matter of recruitment should be pursued, to take advantage of proper support at all levels (Departmental, Faculty, School), and to better express needs so that recruitment</p>   | <p>In Process and ongoing</p> <p>The Graduate Chair and the Dean's office will be in regular contact to maintain good communication and develop an effective recruitment plan.</p>   |

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| is not impeded by policies that can be tweaked.   |  |
| 6. Explore ways to better collaborate with the Faculty of Education, specifically regarding the training of FSL teachers at the MA/MEd level, with negotiation support at the levels of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. | Discussions about the relationship between the two faculties for French language are regular and ongoing. As an example, the recent creation of the <i>Centre d'aide en Français</i> at the French Department (Summer 2020) will help create new collaborative opportunities through research assistantships and work-study contracts open for nominations from the Faculty of Education students. |

**Implementation Plan**

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. The Graduate Program Chair and/or Department Chair/Director, in consultation with SGPS and the Dean of the Faculty will be responsible for enacting and monitoring the actions noted in Implementation Plan. The details of progress made will be presented in the Deans' Annual Planning Document.

| <b>Recommendation</b>                                       | <b>Proposed Action and Follow-up</b>   | <b>Responsibility</b>                         | <b>Timeline</b>             |
|---|--|---|-----------------------------|
| List recommendations requiring implementation               | Describe the action and/or follow-up required to implement the recommendation  | Identify those responsible for implementation | Required date of completion |
| Add years 3 and 4 of the PhD to the streamlining process    | -roadmap after proposal,<br>-help forming supervisory committees,<br>-clarify around milestones,<br>-refresh and update web page   | Graduate Chair,<br>Graduate Committee         | September 2021              |
| Modify the Research Methods and Professionalization seminar | -identify seminar as an important feature of the program,<br>-modify objectives to include the imparting of practical tips and knowledge, as well as supporting the cohort experience. | Graduate Chair,<br>Graduate Committee         | September 2021              |

**Other Opportunities for Program Improvement and Enhancement**

None

**Personnel Issues (Confidential and If Applicable)**

None