

Faculty / Affiliated University College	Arts & Humanities	
Degrees Offered	MA	
Date of Last Review	2012-2013	
Approved Fields	<i>None</i>	
External Reviewers	Dr. Laura Sabourin Associate Professor, Department of Linguistics University of Ottawa	Dr. Molly Babel Associate Professor, Department of Linguistics University of British Columbia
Internal Reviewers	Dr. Jisuo Jin Professor, Associate Dean, Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies, Faculty of Science	Spencer Arbuckle Graduate Student, Neuroscience
Date of Site Visit	March 22-23, 2021	
Date Review Report Received	April 29, 2021	
Date Program/Faculty Response Received	Program Response received July 20, 2021 Dean's Response received Sept 8, 2021	
Evaluation	Good Quality	
Approval Dates	SUPR-G: November 8, 2021 SCAPA : November 24, 2021 Senate (FYI for program recommendation, approval for academic program changes): December 3, 2021	
Year of Next Review	Year of next cyclical review 2028-2029	

Overview of Western's Cyclical Review Assessment Reporting Process

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 Linguistics MA program delivered by the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

This Final Assessment Report (FAR) report considers the following documents:

- the program's self-study,

- the external consultants' report,
- the response from the Linguistics Graduate Program Chair, and
- the response from the Dean' Office, Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

This FAR identifies the strengths of the program and opportunities for program enhancement and improvement, and details the recommendations of the external consultants, noting those recommendations that require attention.

The Implementation Plan details the recommendations from the Final Assessment Report that have been selected for implementation, identifies who is responsible for approving and acting on the recommendations, specifies any action or follow-up that is required, and defines 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 to the Ontario Universities' Council on Quality Assurance. It is publicly accessible on Western's IQAP website.

The FAR, including the Implementation Plan, is the only document from the Graduate cyclical review process that is made public; all other documents are confidential to Western's Faculty of Arts and Humanities, the Linguistics graduate program, the School of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies, and SUPR-G.

Executive Summary

The Masters in Linguistics in the Faculty of Arts & Humanities grew out of Minor and Combined Honours programs initiated in 2000, which themselves were made possible by the hiring of numerous linguists into the Departments of French Studies and Languages and Cultures. The MA was created in 2006 as a natural outgrowth of these programs.

The MA is a non-thesis program, covering six terms, and has remained small – accepting on average five students a year, for a total of ten pursuing the degree in any given year.

The most salient characteristic of the program is its exceptionally strong interdisciplinarity. The program conceives of language as a system of symbols which people know and use. Though students and faculty may incline one way or the other, Linguistics at Western is not “formal linguistics”, nor “applied linguistics”, nor even a pairing of each. It is, instead, a rich melding of frameworks and methods, built around close ties with sister disciplines: anthropology, computer science, communication disorders, language teaching, philosophy, and psychology.

The external reviewers commend the faculty and staff associated with the MA in Linguistics for a program that is of high caliber and unique due to its interdisciplinary nature. They offer some considerations and seven recommendations for further enhancement.

Summary of the Self-Study

Strengths and Innovative Features Identified by the MA in Linguistics Program

- Theoretical and Applied Linguistics Lab (TALL), which provides space for students to collaborate and conduct research;
- “Linguistic Talks at Western” speaker series which includes papers by colleagues and visitors;
- reading groups such as the Language and Cognition group;
- graduate programs in Linguistics in French Studies and in Hispanic Studies;
- Annual workshop Western Interdisciplinary Student Symposium on Language Research (WISLR), which highlights linguistic research at Western and at other local institutions;
- “Spark” outreach program – a one-day visit from high school students.
- Strengths identified by students and recent graduates:
 - o Space: *“Having TALL [lab] was a big asset to the program. Although there were few of us in the program, it was nice to have a space that we could meet, work, print, scan, eat, etc. This made a huge difference in my learning experience.”*

- Supervision: *“Excellent supervisor, great culture of collegiality between graduate students and professors.”*
- Courses: *“I enjoyed interdisciplinary options and consider them a strength of the program.”*
- Financial Support: *“I never would have been able to afford to pay for grad school had it not been for the financial support provided by the program. I graduated poor but debt-free.”*

Concerns Identified by the MA in Linguistics Program

Concerns/Areas of Improvement identified by students and recent graduates:

- Having access to a greater variety of course offerings;
- Enhanced supports to help students transition to graduate school; and
- Lack of engagement by faculty members in the program (though acknowledging that instructors are part of diverse departments).

Review Process

As part of the external review, the review committee, comprising two external reviewers, one internal reviewer and a graduate student, were provided with Volume I and II in advance of the scheduled review and then met over two days with the:

- Vice Provost of the School of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies
- Associate Vice-Provost of the School of Graduate & Postdoctoral Studies
- Vice Provost of Academic Planning, Policy and Faculty
- Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities
- Associate Dean, Research, Faculty of Arts and Humanities
- Director of the Graduate Program in Linguistics
- Former Director of the Graduate Program in Linguistics
- Chair, Department of French Studies
- Chair, Department of Anthropology
- Program Assistant and Administrative Officer
- Associate Chief Librarian
- Program faculty members
- Graduate students

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 of the Linguistics Graduate Programs, collated and submitted to SGPS and the Senate Graduate Program Review Committee (SUPR-G) by the Internal Reviewer with the support of the Office of Academic Quality and Enhancement.

Summative Assessment – External Reviewers’ Report

“This is a unique interdisciplinary program that serves a niche in the MA programs in Linguistics across Canada by virtue of its interdisciplinarity. As evaluated by the program completion statistics, the program attracts highly qualified students and the faculty and program provide ample support to facilitate completion of the program.”

Strengths of the Program

- Current faculty members are highly qualified to successfully run the MA program and show high levels of passion and enthusiasm for the teaching and training of students in the MA program in Linguistics;
- Interdisciplinarity – courses taught by specialists across different fields allow students to acquire knowledge from different viewpoints;
- Very impressive student completion statistics;
- The varied coursework within the program and the flexibility students have to craft their own course plan; and
- The funding for domestic students is great.

Areas of Concern Identified

- The stated admission requirement of an honours degree may be unnecessarily exclusionary, reducing the number of qualified and interested students applying to the program;
- Having sufficient students in the program to be able to provide TA support for all courses that rely on Linguistics graduate students as TAs;
- Many of the supervisory roles have fallen on a small subset of faculty members;
- Funding packages do not apply to international students; and
- The overall program structure is somewhat precarious in the long term.

Summary of the Reviewers’ Recommendations and Program/Faculty Responses

The following are the reviewers’ recommendations in the order listed by the external reviewers.

Reviewers’ Recommendation	Program/Faculty Response
Recommendations requiring implementation have been marked with an asterisk (*). The process for implementation can be found in the Implementation Plan below.	

<p>1. *To improve the recruitment of domestic students we recommend the program mildly modify admissions requirements or even just the public advertisement of them to broaden the domestic prospective student pool.</p>	<p><u>Program response:</u> We will review the specific language and highlight the importance of having a proper background in linguistics rather than a specific cut-off average. Regarding domestic recruitment in general, the program had already identified, with the input from the SGPS, a series of strategies that are in line with suggestions in the report.</p> <p><u>Response from the Dean's Office:</u> In consultation with the Program Director, the Dean will consider this recommendation.</p>
<p>2. *Make clear in course advertisements what language the course will be offered in.</p>	<p><u>Program response:</u> We will make sure that in the future, no confusion arises regarding the language of instruction via clear indication on the website of the program and through counseling with students.</p>
<p>3. Given the expertise of the faculty who lead the program, it is not surprising that there is a lack of experimental linguistics courses and quantitative methods courses and skill development, but given the direction of the field and the post-graduate career opportunities, identifying resources within the university to address those gaps would improve the student experience.</p>	<p><u>Program response:</u> We are not exactly certain why this comment was made given that there are professors in the program that do research in experimental linguistics and use quantitative methods (for instance, Tennant, Rafat, Heap, to name a few), and we have tried as much as possible to ensure that one or more of them teach courses in the program each year. In the past, we have reached out to other units (psychology, speech/communication disorders, education) and our students have been able to enrol in courses where quantitative methods are central.</p> <p>We will continue to be in contact with other units so that students have access to course that emphasize quantitative methods, as well as ensuring that students are exposed to the experimental approaches offered by the linguists who work more directly in the program.</p>
<p>4. The program would benefit from increased buy-in from other departments (e.g., Psychology, Computer Science, Communication Sciences Disorders) and faculties (e.g., Health Sciences, Social</p>	<p><u>Program response:</u> This last comment perhaps reflects a certain lack of knowledge regarding the genesis of the program: the program grew out of creative solutions given the lack of funding it has always faced. This being said, we are in total agreement with the reviewers</p>

<p>Sciences) across campus. The program should develop creative solutions to engage with these units (and others we haven't identified) to develop the infrastructure to support the program. The university has a responsibility in supporting the creation and maintenance of these interdisciplinary bridges. One viable path is to provide support for interdisciplinary faculty positions.</p>	<p>that the university has a responsibility to create and maintain infrastructure that support interdisciplinarity on campus and should incite more participation of other units to the efforts of the program. We will continue to be creative to make sure the program still serves students by reaching out to other units, by establishing contacts with faculty members on campus that have direct interest with research on language and attempt to involve their units into our program.</p> <p><u>Response from the Dean's Office:</u> Dean's office will offer whatever support it can.</p>
<p>5. Across the units that currently contribute substantially to the program, there is an imbalance in how supervisory work is acknowledged. While we know it is impossible to standardize metrics or quantification systems across disparate departments and faculties, there must be some system-wide method of acknowledging the workload of supervision. A failure to quantify this is a recipe for inequity. A system that acknowledges the supervision of Linguistics MA students might facilitate contributions from supervisors in other units across campus, who may currently be deterred if supervision goes unacknowledged.</p>	<p><u>Program response:</u> Although we are in agreement with this suggestion, it is not exactly clear what can be done to resolve this disparity. Acknowledgment of supervisory work is a workload issue which, according to the collective agreement, is established locally in different units across campus. Given that the program is not a unit in the traditional sense, the teaching and supervisory work done by individuals for the linguistic program is bound by the workload document of different home departments.</p> <p><u>Response from the Dean's Office:</u> Dean's office will offer whatever support it can.</p>
<p>6. *Provide funding for one international student a year. This would not only contribute to the diversity of the program, which is vital for a field like linguistics, but also address program concerns about having sufficient TA support for the undergraduate Linguistics program.</p>	<p><u>Program response:</u> The program welcomes this recommendation and has negotiated funding for two international students. Following negotiations between the current director and the Deans of the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and of Social Science, the program has secured two funding packages for international students (including GTA-ship and WGRS) for the current academic cycle. Recognizing that this is a one-time offer from these Faculties that cannot be guaranteed in the future because of the cost of these packages, the program intends to ask the two Faculties whether we could advertise the equivalent of domestic funding packages to recruit</p>

	<p>international students (a GTA and a much smaller WGRS). Discussion with potential international students in the last few months have made it clear that such funding could attract quality students. This would be less costly for the faculty since the students would still need to pay international tuitions, in effect offsetting the cost of the GTA-ship to the institution.</p> <p><u>Response from the Dean's Office:</u> As in the past, the Dean will work with the Dean of Social Science to secure funding packages for international students.</p>
<p>7. *Provide funding and resources to the program for more focused recruitment on domestic students. This could allow the faculty within the department to decide on the best plan of action for this recruitment. This could range from more advertisement at the national association (Canadian Linguistics Association) to finding creative ways to advertise to other Canadian Institutions with linguistics (and linguistic adjacent) programs.</p>	<p><u>Program response:</u> The program seeks to modernizing its promotional strategies with actions recommended in consultation with the SGPS. Intended actions with respect to the recruitment of domestic students are listed in the implementation table below.</p> <p><u>Response from the Dean's Office:</u> Where possible, the Dean's Office will provide the resources to expand its advertisement and recruitment efforts.</p>

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. In each case, the Director of the Graduate Program, in consultation with the SGPS and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts & Humanities (FAH) is responsible for enacting and monitoring the actions noted in Implementation Plan. The details of progress made will be presented in the Dean's Annual Planning document.

Recommendation	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
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
Improve the recruitment of domestic students (recommendations #1 and #7 are combined here)	<p>Review the specific language used in the admission requirements and highlight the importance of having a proper background in linguistics rather than a specific cut-off average.</p> <p>For the next round of recruitment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - send more ads promoting the program to linguistics websites (departments, journals, linguistlist.org); - revamp the website of the program by dedicating a section for potential students; - schedule information zoom meetings for students outside of London, as well as promoting individual meeting with the director of the program if students have specific question regarding the program; and -continue to target promising 4th year students from the undergraduate program. 	Director of the Graduate Program in Linguistics	August 31, 2022
Make clear in course advertisements what language the course will be offered in	Clarify the language of instruction on the program website and through counseling with students.	Director of the Graduate Program in Linguistics	May 1, 2022
Provide funding for one international student a year.	The Program has secured a one-time funding from the Faculties of A&H and SS to	Director of the Graduate Program in Linguistics	May 1, 2022

	<p>support two international students for the current academic cycle.</p> <p>Negotiate with the two Faculties to continue long-term funding (equivalent to domestic funding packages) to recruit international students (GTA + a smaller WGRS).</p>	<p>Dean of Arts and Humanities</p>	
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Other Opportunities for Program Improvement and Enhancement

The external reviewers equally shared that “students expressed concerns that [the standard course format that includes an annotated bibliography, project proposal, presentation, and paper] was too repetitive and focused on the theoretical execution of a research question as opposed to the actual application of the research question. It may be beneficial to (i) make more transparent to students why this format is ideal for their intellectual development as scholars, and (ii) provide or direct students to opportunities to engage in more hands-on research training”.