



Medieval Studies
Final Assessment Report &
Implementation Plan
April 2023

Faculty / Affiliated University College	Faculty of Arts and Humanities	
Degrees Offered	B.A.	
Date of Last Review	New program introduced in 2014	
Modules Reviewed	Major in Medieval Studies	
External Reviewers	Dr. Margaret Aziza Pappano, Department of English Queen’s University	Dr. Allison Fizzard, Department of History Campion College, University of Regina
Internal Reviewers	Dr. Jeffrey Wood, Associate Dean, Undergraduate Faculty of Engineering	Margi Patel, Medical Science Student
Date of Site Visit	January 23, 25 & 27, 2023	
Date Review Report Received	February 17, 2023	
Date Program/Faculty Response Received	Program – March 20, 2023 Faculty – March 27, 2023	
Evaluation	Good Quality	
Approval Dates	SUPR-U: April 26, 2023 ACA: May 10, 2023 Senate (for information): May 19, 2023	
Year of Next Review	2030-2031	
Progress Report	June 2026	

Overview of Western’s Cyclical Review Assessment Reporting Process

In accordance with Western’s Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Final Assessment Report (FAR) provides a summary of the cyclical review, internal responses, and assessment and evaluation of the Medieval Studies Program delivered by the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.

This FAR considers the following documents:

- the program’s self-study brief;
- the external reviewers’ report;
- the response from the Program; and
- the response from the Dean, 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 reviewers – noting those recommendations to be prioritized for implementation.

The Implementation Plan details the recommendations from the FAR 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 FAR (including Implementation Plan) is sent for approval through the Senate Undergraduate Program Review Committee (SUPR-U) and ACA, then for information to Senate and to the Ontario Universities’ Council on Quality Assurance. Subsequently, it is publicly accessible on Western’s IQAP website. The FAR is the only document from the undergraduate cyclical review process that is made public; all other documents are confidential to the Program, Faculty of Arts and Humanities, and SUPR-U.

Executive Summary

Housed in the Department of English and Writing Studies, the Medieval Studies Program draws on resources from across the Faculties of Arts and Humanities, Social Science and Music as well as the affiliate University Colleges. The Major in Medieval Studies was introduced in 2014, two years after a Minor in the field was first offered. Total modular enrolments as of September 2022 included seven students. Total course enrollments in 2021 were at 104 students.

Faculty members from across Western whose courses count towards the Medieval Studies modules were invited to share reflections about the program. Given the small number of students in the program, they were consulted via a series of informal lunches – five students ranging from second to fourth year participated.

The external reviewers shared a positive assessment of the Medieval Studies Program, indicating that *“The Medieval Studies program at Western is to be congratulated for maintaining a vibrant and intellectually rigorous academic program despite the challenges represented by budget cuts and other trends in the university sector [...]”*

Strengths and Innovative Features Identified by the Program

- Working with numerous faculties and the affiliate University Colleges, the Medieval Studies Program is a model of interdisciplinarity.
- Faculty who contribute to the program continue to expand the traditional areas of medieval exploration.
- The first-year Medieval Studies course is a prerequisite for upper-year courses in the field which provides a solution to students having to take numerous prerequisites.
- The Program hosts a very successful speaker series that has brought national and international scholars to campus.
- Well-rounded introduction to the study of original manuscripts.
 - o The Library has a small but impressive collection of medieval manuscript material.
- Program structure is meant to emphasize not only the disciplinary breadth of the field, but also the linguistic and cultural diversity of the medieval world.
- Students are introduced to the methods of searching and using secondary scholarship in a variety of disciplines.
- Administrative support has been smooth, and students commented on the ease of dealing with any administrative issues.

Concerns and Areas of Improvement Identified and Discussed by the Program

- Medieval Studies has little influence over what courses are actually offered in departments across campus.

- Student progression is impacted by course design which must conform to the learning outcomes of home departments.
 - o The challenge of any interdisciplinary program to build progression of content knowledge and research skills into a module that draws on teaching done in a variety of traditional departments.
- Medieval Studies draws on the services of faculty from across Western and its affiliated institutions which is sometimes constrained by staffing issues in these departments.
- Restricted periods of course enrolments can impact student progression as they may not be able to complete necessary prerequisite courses.
- Students can sometimes have difficulty completing a requirement that is available only every other year.

Review Process

As part of the external review, the review committee, comprising two external reviewers, one internal reviewer and an undergraduate student reviewer, were provided with Volume I and II of the self-study brief in advance of the scheduled review and then met virtually over three days with the:

- Vice-Provost of Academic Programs
- Vice-Provost (Academic Planning, Policy and Faculty)
- Director of Academic Quality and Enhancement
- Dean, Faculty of Arts and Humanities
- Associate Dean (Academic), Faculty of Arts and Humanities
- Program Director
- Chair (Acting), Department of English and Writing Studies
- Special Collections Librarian
- Administrative Staff
- Program Faculty
- Program Students

Following the virtual site visit, the external reviewers submitted a comprehensive report of their findings which was sent to the Program and Dean for review and response. Formative documents, including Volumes I and II of the Self-Study, the External Report, and the Program and Decanal responses form the basis of this Final Assessment Report (FAR) of the Medieval Studies Program. The FAR is collated and submitted to SUPR-U by the Internal Reviewer with the support of the Office of Academic Quality and Enhancement.

Summative Assessment – External Reviewers’ Report

External reviewers shared that *“The structure of the program is high in quality and intellectually rigorous, with its two-year Latin requirement distinguishing it from other similar programs at Canadian universities.”*

Strengths of the Program

- Students are drawn to the interdisciplinary nature of this program and Western is a competitive option for students in this field.
- One strength of the program is its rigor which provides excellent foundational training for graduate studies.
- The foundation course, MedSt 1022 allows students to develop an expansive perspective on their interests and is appealing—important in a first-year course—to a diversity of students.
- Research strengths within the Medieval Studies program encompasses Medieval musicology and the faculty’s expertise across a range of Medieval languages.
- The MedSt 3022 course is built on Western’s impressive collection of medieval manuscripts and incunabula which is somewhat unique for students in North American universities.
- The students in the program feel that they are closely mentored by Medieval Studies’ faculty, who identify opportunities for and encourage them to develop their interests.

Areas of Concern or Prospective Improvement

- Modest investments in the following areas could enhance the program:
 - fostering a sense of community among students; and
 - supporting faculty in initiatives surrounding equity, diversity, and inclusion.
- Curriculum could be broadened to include relevant courses which pertain to the histories and cultures of areas beyond Europe.
- Renaissance courses could be listed separately from core Medieval courses. Equally consider implementing course limit regulations which would help preserve the specificity of the program.
- Emphasize the training in the analysis of manuscripts and codicology provided to students.
- Explore ways to enhance interaction among students in the program.

Summary of the Reviewers’ Recommendations and Program/Faculty Responses

The following are the reviewers’ recommendations in the order listed by the external reviewers. Recommendations requiring implementation have been marked with an asterisk (*).

Reviewers’ Recommendation	Program/Faculty Response
<p>Recommendation #1 Consistent with the current state of the field, we recommend that the Medieval Studies program endeavour to incorporate a more global-oriented approach into its structure and, in so far as it is possible, continue to develop curricular and extra-curricular initiatives outside of a European focus. We also recommend that the current foundational course of MedSt 1022 continue to introduce students to non-European as well as to European medieval cultures.</p>	<p>Program: The Program currently includes every course offered within the medieval period offered across campus (ca. 400-1500). Each year, the director contacts undergrad chairs about their course offerings and compiles a list of suitable courses that will be offered the following year. This is posted on the Program website and communicated to continuing students. Any new courses are added to the calendar description of the module.</p> <p>Faculty: The program is comprehensive insofar as it tries to include all the courses offered in the period. It will continue to do so and to maintain its flexible structure, counting courses (globally oriented ones, not least) toward the module. MedSt 1022 will similarly continue to introduce students to non-European medieval cultures.</p>
<p>1.1 Sub-recommendation: Director and Steering Committee consider allowing two courses in Arabic to be substituted for the requirement that Medieval Studies majors take two courses in Latin for their program.</p>	<p>Program: The Steering Committee’s view is that this recommendation is untenable for the following reasons: 1) Courses in classical Arabic are not offered on campus; 2) Medieval Studies is essentially the study of Europe in the period between the fall of Rome and the emergence of the Renaissance, with its rebirth of classical models and ideas; 3) Latin has been an essential part of Medieval Studies programs for the simple reason that there are very few topics within this vast field that will not force the scholar to engage with Latin texts; and 4) Classical Arabic, like Old French, Old English, Catalan, Gothic or any number of other languages used during the period, does not have broad applicability across the discipline.</p> <p>The Program will maintain the current language requirement. As with other languages, students could add Arabic as a course in the Major.</p> <p>Faculty: The program encourages students’ language learning, especially languages in their areas of scholarly interest. This will continue to be the case. However, the Faculty supports the decision to maintain the requirement for Latin courses as foundational for the field.</p>

<p>1.2 Sub-recommendation: In order to expand course offerings which consider regions beyond Europe in the Middle Ages, opportunities for team-teaching be explored in order to draw on diverse areas of expertise among faculty.</p>	<p>Program: Every course offered by the university within the period is included in the program; this will apply to new courses as well. The complexities of team teaching across faculties, and Affiliated Colleges, make such a proposal untenable. There is no mechanism for the Medieval Studies Program to spearhead such a course.</p> <p>Faculty: While the value in team teaching is recognized, the practicalities are difficult to realize since Medieval Studies has inter-faculty courses; workload and course credit are also issues. The program is open to creative approaches and will consider them should they arise.</p>
<p>1.3 Sub-recommendation: The provision of funding for initiatives that would help faculty undertake initiatives which would expand the scope of the program beyond its current focus on medieval Europe.</p>	<p>Program: It is the opinion of the Steering Committee that additional funding dedicated to expanding the courses in the program, given enrolment numbers, cannot be justified. The program is viable precisely because it is efficient and recognizes its limitations.</p> <p>Faculty: The Faculty is open to the development of new courses that would expand upon offerings in the area, but these would have to be undertaken by and within the Departments that offer courses that count toward the module.</p>
<p>1.4 Sub-recommendation: The course HIST 2401E Medieval Europe be re-titled to allow for a diversity of approaches to the teaching of this medieval history survey course.</p>	<p>Program: Medieval Studies is not in a position to direct a Department to change its course offerings or course descriptions. As a full-year course, HIST 2401E covers 1000 years of the history of Europe and its relationships with its neighbours. Changing the title of the course would require changing not only the scope of its coverage, but also the very nature of the course as it would become a sampling of disparate historical moments and cultures rather than a survey of a coherent history.</p> <p>Faculty: This is a matter, not for the Medieval Studies program, but for the Department of History, to consider. While the recommendation will be passed along, the Program is not in a position to require or even advocate for it.</p>
<p>1.5 Sub-recommendation*: Additional courses be formally added to the program which allow students to explore diverse cultures from the period of the Middle Ages and that faculty who teach such courses be invited to join the Steering Committee of the Medieval Studies program.</p>	<p>Program: The Director is in the process of adding a list of courses provided by the reviewers to the modules.</p> <p>Faculty: The program will happily add any courses that take up Medieval Studies and that are not already included in the modules. The Director will be in contact with as many faculty members teaching Medieval courses and will encourage them to join the Steering Committee.</p>

<p>1.6 Sub-recommendation: HIST 3605E Crusaders and Moslems in the Twelfth Century should be renamed with a title along the lines of “Crusaders and Muslims in the Twelfth Century” or “Crusades in the Twelfth Century: Muslims and Christians” to reflect current terminology and suggest a multi-faceted perspective.</p>	<p>Program: The Director will discuss this recommendation with the Undergrad Chair in History, but the Steering Committee is in no position to insist on this change.</p> <p>Faculty: The naming (and re-naming) of courses is determined by Departments. Since that Department is housed in the Faculty of Social Science, while Medieval Studies is housed in Arts and Humanities, the Program and Faculty role here will be supportive and informational.</p>
<p>1.7 Sub-recommendation: The Department of History be encouraged to consider requesting permission of the Dean of Social Sciences to hire in the area of pre-1800 Global Middle Ages.</p>	<p>Program: The Program has expressed the view that the Department of History should strengthen its pre-modern offerings, as one tenured medievalist is nearing retirement, and another is in a senior administration role. The recent addition of Renaissance historian Mitchell Hammond is welcomed. That said, the Program has no control over hiring decisions within Departments.</p> <p>Faculty: The process is a little more complicated than this recommendation suggests. What is more, as above, Medieval Studies is housed in Arts and Humanities and History in Social Science. The Program and Faculty will bring the issue to the attention of the Department of History and to the Faculty of Social Science.</p>
<p>Recommendation #2 Consideration be given to separately marking on the list of courses for the program those courses currently pertaining more to the Renaissance/Early Modern period with a view to classifying them as non-core courses for the program.</p>	<p>Program: Indeed, the Program has expanded the list of “Medieval Courses” beyond the chronological range of 400-1500 as this allows students to complete the program with fewer special permissions. These courses have looked backward (to the Late Antique period) and forward (to the Early Modern period).</p> <p>The Program is unable to “mark” the courses outside the field, for the following reasons:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In practice, many courses within the modules do not conform to the chronological range of the field as periodization as this is fluid even within Europe. • Constructing two course lists: one of “core courses” and another of “supplementary courses” would complicate the calendar and make navigating the interdisciplinary and inter-departmental list more difficult with no real benefit. <p>Faculty: The Program response to this suggestion is comprehensive and reasonable. The program succeeds thanks to its flexibility. Complicating the requirements for completion of the modules, or making them more difficult for students to navigate, is not in students’ or the program’s interest.</p>

<p>Recommendation #3* The Director and Steering Committee consider improving opportunities for Medieval Studies students to interact with one another.</p>	<p>Program: Now that pandemic restrictions have been lifted, the program will restart the Medieval Studies speakers series, which traditionally had good student attendance. The Committee will also work with students in the program to consider less formal ways to encourage student interaction.</p> <p>Faculty: The relaunching of the Medieval Studies Speakers series could help here, as the Program response notes. It is also recommended that the Program consider holding a social event – perhaps in conjunction with one of the talks – that allows students to mingle.</p>
<p>Recommendation #4* The foregrounding in the program of the manuscripts and book history element of the program, emphasizing the training in the analysis of manuscripts and codicology provided to students.</p>	<p>Program: The Library’s medieval holdings have been a valuable asset both for research and teaching and the program will continue to make use of them. Covid restrictions and renovations to Weldon have limited the use of specific library resources for the last few years. The Library’s resources in teaching will resume next year in MedSt 1022 and other instructors will be encouraged to integrate manuscript studies into their courses. Also, the Department of Classical Studies has cross-listed MedSt 3022 (Intro to Medieval Manuscripts) with a Classics Special Topics course which will be offered in September.</p> <p>Faculty: Full access to Weldon library has been restored; instructors in all courses – not least those that draw heavily upon manuscripts – are encouraged to take advantage of its holdings. There are tentative plans for improved space in Weldon for teaching such materials in the coming years, which will only make this prospect more inviting.</p>

Implementation Plan

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. In each case, the Program Chair, and the Dean of the Faculty is responsible for enacting and monitoring the actions noted in Implementation Plan.

The number of recommendations prioritized for implementation has been reduced as some are already being actioned (#1), some are outside the scope of the program and faculty (#1.4, #1.6, and #1.7), and others have been deemed not to move ahead (#1.1, #1.2, #1.3, and #2) as described in the program and faculty responses above. As a result, the recommendations appearing in the implementation table are recommendations #1.5, #3, and #4.

Recommendation	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
<p>Sub-recommendation #1.5: Additional courses be formally added to the program which allow students to explore diverse cultures from the period of the Middle Ages and that faculty who teach such courses be invited to join the Steering Committee of the Medieval Studies program.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The list of courses provided by the reviewers will be added to the modules and course instructors invited to join the Medieval Studies Steering Committee. The Medieval Studies Steering Committee is encouraged to consider other ways to expand the current curriculum to expose students to Medieval histories and cultures of areas beyond Europe. This may include additional courses or content within courses. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director 	By December 2023
<p>Recommendation #3: The Director and Steering Committee consider improving opportunities for Medieval Studies students to interact with one another.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restart the Medieval Studies speakers series. Involve students in planning less formal ways to encourage interaction. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director Steering Committee 	By December 2023
<p>Recommendation #4: Foregrounding the manuscripts and book history element of the program, emphasizing the training in the analysis of manuscripts and codicology provided to students.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Resume the use of the Library’s resources in teaching MedSt 1022 Encourage other instructors to integrate manuscript studies into their courses. MedSt 3022 (Intro to Medieval Manuscripts) will be offered by the Department of Classical Studies as cross-listed with a Classics Special Topics course. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Director Steering Committee 	By September 2023