Western UNIVERSITY · CANADA

English Studies
Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan
August 2026

Faculty / Affiliated University College	Faculty of Arts and Humanities	
Degrees Offered	Bachelor of Arts (BA)	
Date of Last Review	2017-2018	
Modules Reviewed	Honours Specialization in English Language and Literature Honours Specialization in Creative Writing and English Language and Literature Specialization in English Language and Literature Major in English Language and Literature Minor in English Language and Literature Minor in English for Teachers Minor in General English Minor in Page, Stage and Screen Minor in Popular Literature and Cultural Studies	
External Reviewers	Dr. Andrea Walkden Associate Chair, Undergraduate Studies University of Toronto	Dr. Katherine Zien, Associate Professor, Department of English McGill University
Internal Reviewers	Dr. John Cuciurean Don Wright Faculty of Music	Sarwa Khan Medical Sciences Student
Date of Site Visit	February 12 -13, 2026	
Date Review Report Received	March 24, 2026	
Date Program/Faculty Response Received	Program Response: April 9, 2026 Faculty Response: April 13, 2026	
Evaluation	Good Quality	
Approval Dates	SUPR-U: September 22, 2026 ACA: October 6, 2026 Senate (for information): October 23, 2026	
Year of Next Review	2033-2034	
Progress Report	June 2029	

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 Undergraduate English 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 Subcommittee on Program Review - Undergraduate (SUPR-U) and the Senate Committee on Academic Curriculum and Awards (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 cyclical review process that is made public; all other documents are confidential to the Department of English and Writing Studies, the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, and SUPR-U.

Executive Summary

The Department of English and Writing Studies serves as the administrative home for Film Studies, Medieval Studies, and Theatre Studies, in addition to English and Writing Studies. The Department has the highest number of course enrolments in the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, with a total of 513 students enrolled in all its constituent programs at the time of this review, of which, 378 are enrolled in an English Studies module.

All English modules focus on English literature and on the processes by which the disciplinary study of literature is carried out. The Program is designed to provide students with research and analytic tools necessary for basic and advanced study – students learn how to think critically and creatively, how to read and interpret texts produced by the best writers in English, how to argue persuasively, how to build ideas

upon and out of the ideas of others, and how to express their ideas in writing. The 1000-level courses are designed for a broad range of students, introducing basic analytical, communication, and research skills while covering the four major modes or genres (poetry, drama, prose fiction, prose non-fiction). With upper year courses introducing students to literary theory and the multitude of tools available for text analysis and narrowing content to focus more on specific topics or themes.

The self-study included refinement of the program learning outcomes and a curriculum mapping exercise. It was equally informed by a student focus group, a student survey and a dedicated departmental retreat which served as a forum for broad consultation and collaborative planning.

The external reviewers shared a positive assessment of the English Studies Program. They offer three recommendations with considerations for further enhancement;

Strengths and Innovative Features Identified by the Program

- The faculty is comprised of strong educators and researchers that have won numerous prestigious awards and recognitions.
- Cross-listed and globally focused courses connect English Studies with Indigenous Studies, Gender, Sexuality, and Women's Studies, Theatre Studies, environmental humanities, Black literatures, and other interdisciplinary areas.
- Numerous experiential and community-engaged learning opportunities where students can participate in archive-based learning, community projects with London artists and organizations, live performances, drama productions, public readings, workshops, lectures, and other cultural events.
- The Department hosts Canada's longest-running Writer-in-Residence program, which celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2022-23 as well as a Student Writer-in-Residence program described as unique in North America.

Concerns and Areas of Improvement Identified and Discussed by the Program

- Impending retirements and sabbaticals over the next two years will likely impact the number and range of course offerings.
- Lower Graduate student enrolment has caused a shortage of Graduate Teaching Assistants from the department for Undergraduate courses.
- Limited budget impacts the ability to host or support any events or activities.
- Students report fewer course options, overlapping class times, difficulties completing module requirements, and challenges fitting English courses alongside other programs.
- Need for the development of clearer approaches to the academic and ethical challenges created by generative AI, particularly in online courses.

Review Process

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

- Vice-Provost Academic Programs
- Vice-Provost, Academic Planning, Policy and Faculty
- Director of Academic Quality and Enhancement
- Dean, Faculty of Arts and Humanities
- Associate Dean, Undergraduate, Faculty of Arts and Humanities
- Department Chair
- Undergraduate Chair
- Teaching and Learning Librarian
- Special Collections Librarian
- Academic Advisor
- Program Faculty Members
- Undergraduate Program Staff
- Undergraduate Students

Following the site visit, the external reviewers submitted a comprehensive report of their findings which was sent to the Program and Decanal Office 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 FAR. 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 "*with a dedicated and distinguished faculty and an engaged and enthusiastic student body, English Studies is well positioned to remain among the leading Canadian departments in its academic field. […] the Department has demonstrated its ability to recognize and respond to challenges, both ones particular to Western and ones common to English and Humanities departments across Canada, in clear-sighted and commendable ways.*"

Strengths of the Program:

- A leader in its commitment developing inclusive, equitable, and diverse curricula with significant courses on Indigenous Literatures of Turtle Island, eco-poetry, and critical Black and feminist studies.

- Unique course experiential learning opportunities; Theatre Studies 3581F/G: *Toronto: Culture and Performance* (attend theatre in Toronto); English 3580F/G: *Canadian Literature: Creativity and the Local*, a course involving projects with local London-based artists and writers; English 2041F/G, a course in which students mount a theatrical production during the semester; and multiple courses that incorporate the library's archives and rare books collections and staff.
- Students in the program can participate in the Arts and Humanities Internship program, or the Undergraduate Summer Research Internship.
- Faculty members consistently publish and obtain major research grants.
- Strong cross-disciplinary collaborations with other subjects, including Gender, Sexuality, and Women Studies, Critical Race Studies, and the Digital Humanities.
- Flexible entry courses that students can chose from, with many course options to complete their degrees in a timely manner.

Prospective Areas of Improvement for the Program to Consider

- Stronger collaboration and communication among faculties in course scheduling to avoid conflicts and better support interdisciplinary opportunities, particularly between the Faculty of Information and Media Studies and the Faculty of Arts and Humanities.
- Building on the current foundation, expand and further coordinate opportunities for students to engage in experiential learning. Identify internship networks that are more closely aligned with English students' interests and career pathways.
- Strengthen grading and administrative support for Limited Term and Limited Duty instructors with higher-enrollment courses.
- Provide greater clarity in the current context of reduced administrative capacity by discussing pressures and uncertainty regarding the responsibilities of existing staff members.

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
Recommendation #1: Build stronger bridges between its constituent programs by embracing "creativity" as a unifying concept That the Department embrace "creativity" as a unifying concept to integrate its two major fields of study, English Studies and Writing Studies. To encourage further integration, we recommend introducing creative practices into English literature courses, making the relationship between the "creative" and the "critical" a focus of undergraduate exploration and inquiry. Writing Studies faculty can work with English faculty to create assignments that involve creativity and develop evaluative rubrics for these. We also recommend using future hiring opportunities to foster connections between literary criticism and creative practice, while recognizing the need to ensure that the department retains its impressive breadth of teaching areas. Faculty renewal (which will require institutional support) can play an exciting and crucial role in the Department's creative turn.	**Program:** Many English literature courses already include creative practices and assignments; we will identify these clearly on our department website so that current students who are interested in creative options can self-select for these courses. To encourage more instructors to incorporate creative assignments into their English literature courses, we will plan to hold a one-day department retreat focused on pedagogy and assessment for creative options. The Committee on Undergraduate Studies will draft and submit to the Department for approval an addendum to our Information for Instructors handbook that includes a list of best practices for designing creative assignments, suggested rubrics, and any other relevant guidelines to emerge from the retreat. We will continue revising our Department bylaws to formally instantiate the integration of all fields. **Faculty:** The Department has set out a clear and comprehensive plan and timeline to consider this recommendation. We agree with the plan, which draws upon the strengths in the Department in research and teaching in literature and in creative writing. The plan is flexible and adaptable. It allows for instructors to take up the creative option according to their own skills and aptitudes. Finally, implementing this option should help further bring together different strands of the Department and its programs.
Recommendation #2: Develop pedagogies and revise PLOs to meet the challenges and opportunities presented by Gen AI That the Department develop new pedagogies and revise its program learning outcomes to meet the considerable challenges and opportunities presented by the widespread use of generative AI. We recommend that these challenges and opportunities be approached	**Program:** The knowledge taught and skills practiced in the English literature classroom are more valuable, more needed, and more misunderstood than ever in a world dominated by generative AI. The process of revising our program learning outcomes will allow us to reflect on and to formalize our pedagogical approaches and methods in response to the widespread use of AI, as well as other changes and developments in the field of English Studies and in the social and professional world at large. The Department is embarking on a strategic planning process that

through pedagogies that stress the components of learning that are unmistakably human: process-based (e.g., showing your work); feeling-based (e.g., understanding the role of affect and its relation to critical thought in our fellow humans' creative and analytical works); and embodied (e.g., participating in experiential and hands-on iterative learning). Because creative practice and critical thinking already co-exist within English and Writing Studies, the faculty is ideally placed to develop these teaching practices both for its own program students and for the wider Arts and Humanities community.	will establish a five-year Strategic Plan by April 2027. The Strategic Plan is a first step before the Department develops Program Objectives and Program-level Learning Outcomes that align with the new OUCQA guidelines. The new Program Objectives and PLOs will replace the 1000-,2000-,3000-, and 4000-level learning outcomes currently in place. **Faculty:** The Department's strategic planning process is the right mechanism to address this recommendation. By considering the program's learning outcomes as part of that process, the Department will be able to articulate its broad goals and to link those outcomes to them. The Department's plan is forward looking, and we support it.
Recommendation #3: Revisit Current Module Offerings That the Department consider removing modules that are underenrolled or less viable and conserve faculty resources for the crucial blockbuster and path- breaking courses that recruit students and showcase curricular diversity and ingenuity.	**Program:** We have recently circulated a proposal to withdraw the Minor in Popular Literature and Cultural Studies. We will be withdrawing the Minor in Page, Stage, and Screen (1 student enrolled in FW25). This withdrawal will eliminate the requirement for English 2112F/G (Film 2212F/G; Theatre Studies 2212F/G): *Adapting Across Page, Stage, and Screen*. With the Minor in Popular Literature and Cultural Studies and the Minor in Page, Stage, and Screen withdrawn, English will be at a minimum number of modules, and none of them has specific dedicated resources. In Theatre Studies, we are working to reintegrate the entire program into English. This will reduce modules further, though this is in a constituent program (with its own IQAP process). **Faculty:** As the Department has outlined, this work has already begun. A proposal to withdraw one undersubscribed module (in popular culture and literature) is working its way through the approval process, and the Department has plans to withdraw another. This second module ("Page, Stage, and Screen") has a required course that the Department will no longer have to offer, freeing up teaching resources for other, more robust courses and modules.

Implementation Plan

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

Recommendation	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Recommendation #1: Build stronger bridges between its constituent programs by embracing "creativity" as a unifying concept	1. Identify and showcase practices and assignments focused on "creativity" in English Literature courses and highlight these on the department website to support students who may be interested. 2. Hold a retreat focused on pedagogy and creative options for assessments. 3. Draft and submit an addendum to the "Information for Instructors Handbook" that includes a list of best practices for designing creative assignments, suggested rubrics, and any other relevant guidelines to emerge from the retreat.	1. Undergraduate Coordinator 2. Department Officers/Program Directors 3. Committee on Undergraduate Studies	1. By December 2026 2. By April 2027 3. By August 2027
Recommendation #2: Develop pedagogies and revise PLOs to meet the challenges and opportunities presented by Gen AI	1. Embark on a process that will establish a five-year Strategic Plan. 2. Following the Strategic Plan development, revise Program Objectives and Program-level Learning Outcomes that specifically account for the current realities of AI.	1. Department Officers/Program Directors 2. Department Chair, Undergraduate Chair	1. By April 2027 2. By April 2028
Recommendation #3: Revisit Current Module Offerings	1. Submit formal proposal for the withdrawal of the Minor in Page, Stage and Screen. 2. Work toward the reintegration of the Theatre Studies program into English, further reducing modules.	1. Department Chair, Undergraduate Chair 2. Department Chair, Director of Theatre Studies	1. By September 2027 2. By April 2028