Western UNIVERSITY · CANADA

Linguistics
Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan
July 2026

Faculty / Affiliated University College	Faculty of Arts and Humanities, Faculty of Social Science	
Degrees Offered	Bachelor of Arts (BA)	
Date of Last Review	2017-2018	
Modules Reviewed	Honours Specialization in Linguistics Major in Linguistics Minor in Linguistics	
External Reviewers	Dr. Catherine Anderson Associate Professor, Linguistics & Languages McMaster University	Dr. Nicole Rosen, Associate Professor, Department of Linguistics University of Manitoba
Internal Reviewers	Dr. Christina Booker Department of Chemistry, Faculty of Science	Aliya Jokhu Undergraduate Student, Interdisciplinary Medical Science
Date of Site Visit	February 23 and 24, 2026	
Date Review Report Received	April 9, 2026	
Date Program/Faculty Response Received	Program Response: May 14, 2026 Faculty Response: May 26, 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 Linguistics Program, delivered by the Faculty of Arts and Humanities and the Faculty of Social Science.

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 (in collaboration with the Decanal Office of the Faculty of Social Science).

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 Undergraduate Linguistics Program, the Faculty of Arts and Humanities, the Faculty of Social Science, and SUPR-U.

Executive Summary

Linguistics at Western began as a part of the Anthropology program, until developments in the field of Linguistic Anthropology in the 1980s and 1990s led to divergences between Linguistics and Linguistic Anthropology. In 2000, Linguistics faculty members created the current Inter-Faculty Linguistics Program, which is affiliated with both the Faculty of Social Science and the Faculty of Arts and Humanities. The program is administered by two co-directors, one from each faculty. As an inherently interdisciplinary field, Linguistics fits well with Western's model of majors and minors that can be combined both within and across faculties. The Linguistics modules (Minor, Major, Honours Specialization) build on a core of formal and social approaches to the study of language; after the obligatory introductory courses in first year, students must

take phonetics, phonology, syntax, and language variation and change. Students are then able to choose from a range of courses that consider different aspects of language and different methodologies, including courses taught in French and Spanish. The program's success derives from the dynamic involvement of linguists from across campus, in the departments of Anthropology, French Studies, Languages, Cultures and Linguistics, Philosophy, Psychology, English and Writing Studies, Classical Studies, and the school of Communication Sciences and Disorders. Enrolment of students registered in a least one Linguistics module in 2024-2025 was 42 students.

The self-study was informed by a review of the program learning outcomes and a curriculum mapping exercise. Additionally, focus groups and a survey with current students were administered, as well as a dedicated consultation with faculty members affiliated with the program which served as a forum for discussion and collaborative planning.

The external reviewers shared a positive assessment of the Linguistics Undergraduate Program. They offer four recommendations with considerations for further enhancement.

Strengths and Innovative Features Identified by the Program

- An interdisciplinary curriculum integrates formal and social approaches to language across Arts and Humanities, Social Science, and several contributing departments, while allowing students to take relevant courses in English, French, and Spanish.
- Relatively small upper-year classes support active discussion, detailed feedback, individualized assistance, collaborative learning, and innovative assessments.
    - Students and alumni consistently value the accessible, supportive faculty, close mentorship, academic advising, and opportunities to develop sustained relationships with instructors.
    - Student participation in data analysis, field experiences, community-based projects, individual and group research, supervised theses, and work involving Indigenous language revitalization.
- Opportunities to participate in Undergraduate Summer Research Internships, supervised research courses, an Honours thesis, access to the Theoretical and Applied Linguistics Laboratory, and opportunities to present research at a student symposium.
- Linguistics Talks lecture series which aims to highlight all the various ways in which Linguists are engaged throughout Western.

Concerns and Areas of Improvement Identified and Discussed by the Program

- Declining and vulnerable faculty complement due to retirements, leaves, administrative responsibilities, and reliance on part-time instructors.
- The interfaculty structure creates ambiguity concerning the program's administrative home, course scheduling, teaching assignments, funding, and responsibility for sustaining the curriculum.
- Module enrolments have declined, while university minimum-enrolment expectations place pressure on small second-year and upper-year courses that are central to the program's experiential and student-engaged pedagogy.
- Required and elective courses may be offered only on rotation, creating scheduling difficulties, prerequisite barriers, and challenges for students who enter the program later or combine Linguistics with another module.
- Absence of dedicated semantics and morphology courses, along with insufficient preparation in computational linguistics, statistics, data analysis, and contemporary applications such as artificial intelligence and large language models.

Review Process

As part of the external review, the review committee, comprising two external reviewers, one internal reviewer and a 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
- Teaching and Learning Librarian
- Dean, Faculty of Arts and Humanities
- Dean, Faculty of Social Science
- Associate Dean, Academic, Faculty of Arts and Humanities
- Associate Dean, Academic, Faculty of Social Science
- Department Chairs (French, Anthropology, Languages and Cultures)
- Program Co-Directors
- 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 "*data from students and graduates indicates a high degree of satisfaction with the training they received in the Linguistics program. In survey data, focus group data, and in our meetings with students, multiple voices expressed appreciation that faculty members created welcoming, collaborative class environments, attended to students' wellbeing, and designed course activities that supported students' progress towards learning outcomes.*"

Strengths of the Program:

- The program combines language, culture, and society across disciplinary perspectives, supporting Western's priorities in future-focused learning, global engagement, and reconciliation.
- Flexible modular structure, elective courses and required courses offer diverse approaches to the study of linguistics.
- Small class sizes offer personalized and collaborative learning activities with ample feedback from instructors and teaching assistants.
- A unique offering of the program is the set of courses that prepare students to do work in reclaiming and revitalizing endangered languages, including languages that are Indigenous to the lands that Western sits on.
- Upper-year courses and research internships engage students in fieldwork, original data analysis, language-resource digitization and community interaction.
- Faculty members are active in their subdisciplines, in scholarly associations, and in the community with scholarship spanning a wide and diverse range of areas of Linguistics, from the global (such as fieldwork in Africa and South America) to the profoundly local (place names and people's names in Southern Ontario).

Prospective Areas of Improvement for the Program to Consider

- The interfaculty structure currently produces inefficient decision-making, unclear administrative roles, under-recognized teaching contributions, and uncertainty about how enrolment and resources should be prioritized.
- Only a fraction of the courses listed in the program structure are offered regularly, frustrating students and making modular pathways difficult to plan.
- Strengthen recruitment through the introductory course by incorporating real-world applications and retaining an in-person option alongside accessible online delivery.
- Similar upper-year courses offered in different languages could be combined or cross-listed.
- Consider greater emphasis on areas such as language teaching, revitalization, documentation, corpus and data analysis, media, decolonization, translation, and preparation for speech-language pathology.

- Construct a plan to ensure support for the professional development of part-time instructors and mentoring to ensure that the working relationship between instructors and TAs is effective.

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: Restructure Course Offerings and Delivery Consider revamping or reimagining program course offerings to focus on applications of linguistics for undergraduates, rather than traditional so-called 'core' (i.e. formal, theoretical) courses, to reflect changes in the field and in today's student body. Some examples include: bringing Applied Linguistics courses already being offered into the Linguistics program (i.e., French 3265B, French 3890A/B, and similar courses), being strategic in hiring a new faculty member to complement this refocus, such as with a digital humanities or otherwise applied humanities focus. To make these courses sustainable, consider combining/cross-listing upper-year formal courses currently offered in different languages to streamline and avoid students duplicating course content in multiple courses.	**Program:** Over the next year, Linguistics faculty will identify socially relevant applications, revise existing courses, and plan new offerings, subject to departmental approvals and teaching resources. Implementation will be gradual and may take up to three years. Applied Linguistics courses currently taught in French may be incorporated into the program and taught in English, potentially at the 2000 level. Faculty members will also advise the department on priorities for its new hire. The program will explore cross-listing syntax and phonology courses across Linguistics, French, and Spanish, with multilingual assignment options. The Major will permit up to 1.0 language-course credits, preferably in Indigenous languages, while the Minor will remain unchanged. Formal syntax and phonology courses may move to third year, although phonetics will remain at second year. The program will retain prerequisites for Anthropology 3339F/G to preserve academic rigor and may elevate it to the 4000 level. Linguistics 4247A/B and Linguistics 4248A/B will continue annually because they are required graduate courses. **Faculty:** This proposal is fully in line with our sense of what our undergraduates are looking for. While they are of course interested in the theoretical issues raised by linguistics, they also seek instruction in applied approaches that they see as transferrable skills. The review of current course offerings proposed by the program, as well as of possible new courses, is entirely welcome. Since the approval process for the revision and introduction of courses is quite streamlined, the process could take place over the next three years, as the program suggests, or less. Any hiring would have to go through the normal University processes, but we agree that areas of student interest should be a strong factor in determining the area of such a hire. It makes good sense to count all linguistics courses (including those offered in French) in Linguistics modules.

Recommendation #2: Address Enrolments and Student Experience To increase enrolment, continue offering an online section of Linguistics 1027A/B while adding an in-person section. Ensure comparable assessments, consider an optional weekly synchronous session online, use active-learning strategies in both formats, and provide program-wide TA training. To improve the module-student experience, publish streamlined requirements listing regularly offered courses, map typical year-by-year pathways, remove discontinued courses from the calendar, and review upper-year prerequisites to improve access without compromising student success. The interfaculty structure undercounts enrolment by splitting students across two faculties. All Linguistics students should be counted in Arts & Humanities, with a written agreement compensating Social Science for essential teaching and formally recognizing Anthropology faculty contributions.	**Program:** The program will continue offering Linguistics 1027A/B online annually and add an in-person section beginning September 2026. Instructors will coordinate comparable assessments, consider optional synchronous tutorials within current regulations, incorporate active learning, and provide TA training through duty specifications and graduate orientation. The module checklist and website will be updated with current and upcoming course offerings and year-specific planning guidance. Obsolete courses have already been removed from module descriptions. Existing prerequisites will remain to support student success, although some formal courses may move to the 3000 level. To improve enrolment reporting, the program proposes dividing Linguistics enrolments equally between the departments of Anthropology and Languages, Cultures and Linguistics (LCL), reflecting both departments' essential contributions, and configuring the institutional enrolment dashboard accordingly. **Faculty:** The Dean's Offices support fair and consistent course delivery, strong student engagement, and adequate TA training. The Offices endorse reviewing and streamlining the Linguistics modules to increase flexibility, removing extraneous courses, and improving access to upper-year offerings. Enrolment-counting practices across both faculties should be discussed by the Deans and Provost using available data.
Recommendation #3: Restructure Program Leadership Consider assigning a single program director within the new Language, Culture and Linguistics department. The current co-director model is inefficient, and neither co-director is adequately compensated for their work. The timing is excellent to reorganize the leadership model within the new department with consideration for mechanisms to ensure the voice and work of Anthropology faculty members are fully integrated.	**Program:** The program clarifies that Linguistics originated in Anthropology, with French Studies joining when the interfaculty program began in 2000. It supports replacing the co-director model with a single director serving a two-year term but will retain the program's interfaculty structure as a key interdisciplinary strength. The directorship will rotate between LCL and Anthropology, with an Anthropology faculty member normally serving every third term. This model recognizes Anthropology's integral contribution while reflecting the larger pool of potential directors in LCL. The Director should receive a teaching release, funded by their home department and equivalent to that of its Undergraduate Chair. Subject to approval, the new leadership structure could begin in July 2027 following necessary budget, workload, and teaching-plan adjustments.

	Faculty: The Decanal Offices encourage having a single program coordinator, so long as all parties participating in the Linguistics program feel heard and represented.
Recommendation #4: Highlight the Value of Linguistics for Reconciliation A key element of the Western University Strategic Plan is to "Advance Reconciliation with Indigenous Communities". The pathway embedded within the Linguistics program, also open to students majoring in Sociocultural and Linguistic Anthropology, prepares learners to contribute to the work of language preservation, revitalization, and reclamation and thereby advances Western's progress towards its strategic goals and its response to the TRC's Calls to Action. The program should partner with colleagues in Indigenous Studies to ensure that Anthropology 2253A/B: *Endangered Languages and Revitalization* is offered annually and enrolls students from Linguistics, Anthropology, and Indigenous Studies. This will provide a cohort of adequately trained students to benefit from the experiential learning opportunities in Anthropology 3343: *Language Revitalization in Practice* and Anthropology 4415A/B: *Field Techniques in Linguistics* (formerly Anthropology 3237A/B).	**Program:** We support this recommendation to advance EDIDA and Reconciliation goals by regularly offering those courses. We have begun engaging in conversations with IS to actively develop the kind of mutually beneficial partnership the reviewers suggest. Anthropology 3343A/B is already included in modules for Anthropology, Linguistics and Indigenous Studies. Anthropology 4415A/B has prerequisites from Linguistics which would make it difficult for students from Indigenous Studies or Anthropology to succeed without them. We will implement the recommendation to regularly offer the courses with the approval and commitment from the Social Sciences dean’s office and the Anthropology Department that these courses will be offered in alternating years. In addition, we propose that funds be made available by both Arts and Humanities and Social Sciences so that Indigenous Studies or LCL can offer at least 1.0 courses in Indigenous languages each year. **Faculty:** We support the recommendation to highlight the vital role language plays in the ongoing work of reconciliation. We also support continuing to offer courses that will make that possible. We cannot say whether it would be preferable to offer specific courses yearly or every other year. This is not a matter of enrolment thresholds so much as it is of creating the best learning environment: courses of adequate size to have a real cohort, for example. We support collaboration with the Indigenous Studies program.

Implementation Plan

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

Recommendation	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Recommendation #1: Restructure Course Offerings and Delivery	1. Identify areas relevant to students and society and then explore modifying current course content and or developing new courses. 2. Modify the existing Linguistics modules, pending approvals, to include Applied Linguistics courses currently taught in French. 3. Consider combining/cross-listing upper-year courses currently offered in different languages for syntax courses. 4. Add the option to count up to 1.0 language course for the Major in Linguistics, with the stipulation that Indigenous language courses are preferred pending approvals. 5. Consider changing Anthropology 3339F/G to a 4000-level course, and the prerequisite Linguistics courses to 3000-level.	Co-directors; Department Chairs	1. By September 2027 2. By January 2027 3. By July 2028 4. By May 2027 5. By May 2027
Recommendation #2: Address Enrolments and Student Experience	1. Continue to offer one section of Linguistics 1027A/B online each year, with one section in person. Should there be different instructors, they will coordinate to ensure assessments are comparable. 2. Inform the instructors of the Linguistics courses that training hours should be included in the Duties Specification Agreement. 3. Address TA Training during the mandatory orientation for the incoming graduate students who will TA. The training will be integrated with the needs of the relevant course instructors. 4. Examine and clarify enrolment-counting practices across both faculties.	1-3. Co-directors; Department Chairs 4. Decanal Offices	1-3. By September 2026 4. By September 2027

Recommendation #3: Restructure Program Leadership	Revise the current leadership structure to that of a single Program Director, normally serving for a two-year term with a rotation of the Directorship role among the participating faculties.	Co-directors; Department Chairs	By July 2027
Recommendation #4: Highlight the Value of Linguistics for Reconciliation	Regularly offer Anthropology 2235A/B pending approval and commitment from other programs.	Co-directors; Department Chairs	By September 2027