Ongoing Improvement Progress Report

Instructions and Report Template

As part of the protocols outlined in Western's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), to facilitate the continuous improvement of academic programs between review cycles, in connection with the Final Assessment Report (FAR) and Implementation Plan, a monitoring process will include an Ongoing Improvement Progress Report. The outcomes of this report will be considered as part of the program's next cyclical review.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the operationalization of the implementation plan following a Cyclical Program Review (or the review of a New Program). This should include a brief summary of actions taken by the Program and the Dean's Office since the completion of the review (usually about three years), as well as an update on the stage of implementation for all applicable items. These include:

- whether the action item(s) are in progress, complete or no longer applicable (with a brief explanation);
- the timelines of each item and how they are progressing or expected to progress, particularly if they are diverting from original timelines in the FAR and Implementation Plan, and;
- a short description of any other program developments and improvements that have taken place following the review.
- For new programs only, an evaluation of the initial administration and resourcing of the program.

The following report template has been created for the program to report on progress made regarding recommendations presented in the Implementation Plan, and any other relevant program developments and enhancements.

- The program will complete the template and submit it to the faculty Dean's Office for sign-off.
- The program will then submit the completed Ongoing Improvement and Progress Report to the Office of Academic Quality and Enhancement (OAQE). Reports are due by June 21, 2024.
    - The OAQE will present all Ongoing Improvement and Progress Reports to SUPR-U/G. Any follow-up questions or concerns will be communicated to the program and Dean's Office by the OAQE.
    - It should be noted that as per the requirements of the province's Quality Council, progress reports will be posted on the reports page of the OAQE website.

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Ongoing Improvement Progress Report

Comparative Literature M.A., Ph.D. / Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Program	Comparative Literature M.A., Ph.D.	**Faculty / Affiliated University College**	Faculty of Arts & Humanities
Approval Dates of the Review	SUPR-G: May 16, 2022 SCAPA: May 25, 2022 Senate: June 10, 2022	**Year of the Next Review**	2028-2029
Link to the Programs Final Assessment Report (FAR)	https://www.uwo.ca/pvp/vpacademic/iqap/academic_programs/iqap_reports/artsgrad/2022%20Comparative%20Literature%20Program%20Review.pdf		
If applicable, submission of follow-up report(s)			

	Name	**Signature**	**Date**
Program Chair/Director	Melitta Adamson		May 31, 2024
Dean (or designate)	Ileana Paul		May 31, 2024

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Progress Update on the Implementation Plan

Recommendation #1	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Hold faculty meetings every semester to provide more effective channels for consultation, participation, and decision-making for faculty who are not members of the Graduate Committee.	Setup regular meetings with program faculty members. At least one in the fall and one in the winter term.	Graduate Chair	By December 2022 and By April 2023

Recommendation Implemented

☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? ☒ Yes ☐ No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

A *Lunchtime Symposium* for Comparative Literature faculty members in March 2023 discussed the future of the CL program at Western: "*Where do we go from here*?". This was a suitable forum for engaging program members in consultation and decision-making. During this academic year, one Lunchtime Symposium was held for faculty and graduate students (see Recommendation #2).

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

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During the 2024-2025 academic year, the program plans to host bi-annual lunchtime symposia that will include faculty and graduate students to heighten ongoing consultation and inclusive decision-making. Lunchtime symposia on campus that combine a light lunch with presentations on pedagogy and administration as well as discussions of current issues are an effective way to exchange ideas in a relaxed atmosphere.

Additional Comments

If applicable

Recommendation #2	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**
Organize an annual or biannual faculty and student retreat to discuss major curricular changes, program vision, public events, and future steps.	Schedule a lunch-time symposium for students and faculty. Consider the theme of reforms to the Major Field examination for the first event.	Graduate Chair Graduate Assistant	By December 2022

Recommendation Implemented

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? ☐ Yes ☐ No

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Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

Two lunchtime symposia were held during the 2022-2023 academic year, one for faculty and graduate students in October 2022 and one in March 2023 for faculty members only (see Recommendation #1). The new format of the Major Field examination came into effect on September 1, 2022, and has been working well. In the October 2022 symposium the discussion focused mainly on the future of Comparative Literature as an academic discipline, the future of the Comparative Literature program at Western and curriculum reform, in particular the development of a new Fundamentals course for both MA and PhD students which was first offered in the academic year 2023-2024.

The most recent Lunchtime Symposium for CL Faculty and graduate students took place on April 3, 2024. Among the topics discussed were the recent program changes, the Comparative Literature Research Forum, the 2024 Graduate Conference, and the Comparative Literature Graduate Journal.

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

Given the time constraints of faculty and graduate students, setting aside a half day during the week or on weekends for a program retreat is impractical. The program has therefore opted for bi-annual lunchtime symposia which better meet the needs of both constituents.

Additional Comments

If applicable

Recommendation #3	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**

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Review the workload of the Graduate Chair and develop a plan for succession of program leadership.	Set a meeting to discuss the Graduate Chair's workload and feasible approaches to supporting the sustainability of program leadership (e.g., the feasibility of establishing an Associate Graduate Chair position as a support and pathway to leadership).	Graduate Chair Department Chair Associate Dean	By December 2022

Recommendation Implemented

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

A Zoom meeting was convened on October 6, 2022, with the Associate Dean, the CL Graduate Chair, and the Graduate Assistant to review the Graduate Chair's workload and plan for succession of program leadership. It was determined (1) that the Graduate Chair workload would remain unaltered in 2022-2023; (2) that there was no point in appointing an Associate Graduate Chair four months into the new academic year.

More recently, while we recognize the desirability to have an Associate Graduate Chair, it was determined that given the Department complement this was not possible. Discussions of program leadership with the Department Chair and the Acting Dean have occurred on a regular basis and are ongoing. On March 22, 2024, the Acting Dean asked Professor Melitta Adamson to continue serving as Graduate Chair in 2024-2025.

Next Steps (if applicable)

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What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

The search for a graduate chair to succeed Melitta Adamson in 2025 will be underway in the fall of 2024.

Additional Comments

If applicabl

Recommendation #5	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**
Examine additional funding opportunities for graduate students in the program, especially those affected by the reduced funding support packages.	Set a meeting to discuss additional Faculty funding support for students with the Department Chair and Dean's Office. Continue offering graduate assistantships to support program development work where possible.	Graduate Chair Department Chair Associate Dean	By December 2022

Recommendation Implemented

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

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In April 2023, the Graduate Chair met with the Acting Department Chair and Associate Dean to discuss possible new sources of funding for graduate students in both streams of the program, but especially for future International MA students. It was recommended that CL students be encouraged to seek paid employment as Research Assistants for faculty members who receive SSHRC grants for projects in Arts and Humanities, Social Sciences, and Media and Information Sciences. The Graduate Chair noted that CL graduate students in both streams also need strong timely encouragement to apply for internal faculty awards. The Acting Department Chair pointed to one further source of supplementary funds -- travel grants as well as emergency loans -- for CL graduate students, namely the Society of Graduate Students (SOGS).
Next Steps (if applicable) *What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?* Ongoing communication with graduate students, clearly informing them of existing and new funding sources as well as awards.
Additional Comments *If applicable*

Recommendation #6	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**
Establish a transparent process for course assignments and explore opportunities to	Begin drafting a formal process for drawing up CL graduate courses and their assignments, to be piloted in the fall of 2022 for the 2023-2024 academic year.	Graduate Chair Department Chair	By December 2022

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assign a maximum number of different faculty to teach the CL courses.			

Recommendation Implemented

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

The Graduate Chair and the Acting Department Chair met in November 2022 to discuss course assignments for the Comparative Literature graduate program and proposed several changes in the program requirements for CL. Starting in 2023-2024, incoming students in both the MA stream and the PhD streams are required to take a revamped version of Fundamentals which will include a unit on Research Methods. The Propaedeutics course will cease to be offered since the main topics covered in it will henceforth be included in Fundamentals. Only two other CL courses will be offered. To satisfy their course load requirement, students will now have to choose their fourth graduate course from the offerings in other programs such as English, French, Philosophy, Hispanic Studies, Theory and Criticism.

The set of three Program Modifications proposed in the Five-Year Plan for Comparative Literature was unanimously approved by the CL Graduate Committee on March 20, 2023, and subsequently by SUPR-G.

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

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The Department has scheduled four CL graduate courses for 2024-2025, one of them being crosslisted with Hispanic Studies. The specifics of Comparative Literature course planning and assigning of courses are traditionally made at the department level by the chair and graduate chair in consultation with the CL Faculty. When courses are offered by faculty members from other departments, Comparative Literature has to make arrangements with these departments to secure such courses. Going forward, a discussion of graduate course offerings will be part of the agenda of the fall lunchtime symposia as they fall in the time period when course planning for the following year is usually started.
Additional Comments *If applicable*

Recommendation #7	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**
Explore opportunities to assign faculty that can teach courses that align with graduate student research interests.	Invite faculty with comparatist expertise in other programs to join the CL faculty. Discuss prospective opportunities to develop new courses that more closely align with student research interests at an upcoming program Faculty member meeting. Setup a meeting with the Department Chair and Dean's Office to discuss how this issue can be tampered via faculty planning mechanisms	Graduate Chair Department Chair Associate Dean	By December 2022
Recommendation Implemented			

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☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? ☐ Yes ☐ No
Progress *What specific actions have been taken?* In April 2023, invitations to join the Comparative Literature faculty were issued by the Graduate Chair to twelve scholars. Of the Comparative Literature Faculty invited in April 2023, six have already been approved by SGPS. Several more applications are in progress.
Next Steps (if applicable) *What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?* An increased number of graduate courses in 2024-2025 (see Recommendation #6 above) plus the opportunity to take graduate courses from the offerings in other programs should give students increased options in aligning their course work more closely with their research interests. Discussions about faculty complement planning are ongoing between the Department Chair and the Dean, recognizing budgetary constraints.
Additional Comments *If applicable*

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Recommendation #9	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Move away from the Major Field Exam lists and replace them with student prepared lists that correspond with their areas of interests.	Work with the SGPS to draft and submit this modification. Once approved, update and restructure the reading lists.	Graduate Chair Graduate Committee Student Reps	By June 2023

Recommendation Implemented

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

From September 2022 onwards, for all incoming doctoral students, the old list of Major Fields and the out-of-date reading lists that went with them have been replaced by a "recipe" for individually tailored bibliographies for literary fields defined by the students themselves.

In 2023-2024 the new “recipe” format for individually tailored bibliographies for literary fields defined by the students was fully implemented.

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

A

Additional Comments *If applicable*

Recommendation #14	**Proposed Action and Follow-up**	**Responsibility**	**Timeline**
Update and improve the webpage and explore possible recruitment and outreach through social media.	Complete work already underway on the graduate program website (as listed in the program response) Set up a meeting with the Dean's Office to outline a plan regarding support with enhancing the program's online presence, outreach and publicity.	Graduate Chair Department Chair Associate Dean	By December 2022
Recommendation Implemented ☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? ☐ Yes ☐ No			

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Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

In September 2022, the Graduate Assistant hired a work-study applicant, a Computer Science student, to assist her with website development for Comparative Literature. A full list of improvements is on file at the Graduate Assistant's office. A lunchtime meeting of the former graduate chair with a member of the Dean's Office took place in the spring of 2023. The Comparative Literature online presence, outreach, and publicity were also discussed in the spring 2024 Lunchtime Symposium for faculty and graduate students which was attended by the acting dean.

With a predominantly international student body, the program recently added information on "Graduate Resources" ranging from housing, transportation, weather, and paperwork to arrival on campus, cultural differences, and entertainment in London. To showcase the annual graduate conference, the webpage "Graduate Conferences" now includes the posters for all graduate conferences going back to 1999. The page "Alumni Profiles" is continually updated and is a testament to the many successful careers our graduates have embarked on.

The Associate Dean Research and Graduate Studies is currently working with the communications specialist for the Faculty of Arts and Humanities on developing recruitment materials for all graduate programs in Arts and Humanities.

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

With the support of the Dean's Office, the Department of Languages and Cultures which houses the CL graduate program is currently in the process of a major overhaul of its website which is overseen by the department chair, undergraduate chair and the graduate chairs in Comparative Literature and Hispanic Studies.

Additional Comments

If applicable

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Recommendation #18	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Address the imbalance of workload in terms of supervisory load and administration.	1) New faculty to be recruited from adjacent graduate programs to reduce supervisory load. 2) Amendments to policies regarding supervisory limits will be proposed and discussed for approval at an upcoming Graduate Committee meeting. 3) The Dean will consult with the Department Chair to address the hiring needs of the program as part of the University's (and Faculty's) planning process.	1 & 2) Graduate Chair, Graduate Committee 3) Department Chair, Associate Dean, Dean	By December 2022

Recommendation Implemented

☒ Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? ☐ Yes ☐ No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

See the response to Recommendation #7 (above). Before 2017, the CL program had no policy regarding supervisory limits. One of the first reforms proposed by the former Graduate Chair (April 2017) and approved by the Graduate Committee (May 2017) was the adoption of a policy on the distribution of supervisory labour.

Since this policy has worked well since 2017-2018 (the academic year when it was officially adopted), the current Graduate Chair sees no need to formulate a new policy or to revise the one already in place.

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Next Steps (if applicable) *What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?*
Additional Comments *If applicable*

Note: The total number of expandable text boxes will be dependent on the number of prioritized recommendations appearing in the program's most recent Final Assessment Report (FAR).

Continuous Program Enhancement
What additional initiatives or changes has the program been working on in relation to continuous program improvement?