Theology
Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan

Faculty / Affiliated University College
Huron University College

Degrees Offered
MA

Approved Fields
N/A

External Consultants
Catherine E. Clifford, Professor, Faculty of Theology, Saint Paul University, Ottawa
Gerbern S. Oegema, Professor, School of Religious Studies, McGill University

Internal Reviewer
Pam McKenzie, Associate Dean Graduate and Postdoctoral, FIMS
Patrick Hill, PhD student, Geology/Planetary Science

Date of Site Visit
25-26 October 2018

Evaluation
Good Quality with report due 2021

Approval Dates
SUPR-G: January 21, 2019
SCAPA: March 6, 2019
Senate (FYI only): March 15, 2019

Date of Next Review
Year of next cyclical review 2020-2027

In accordance with Western’s Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Final Assessment Report provides a summary of the cyclical review, internal responses and assessment and evaluation of Graduate Program delivered by the Faculty of Theology at Huron University College. This report considers the following documents: the program’s self-study, the external consultants’ report and the responses from the Faculty. The Final Assessment Report identifies the strengths of the program, opportunities for program enhancement and improvement and details and prioritizes the recommendations of the external consultants and prioritizes those recommendations that are selected for implementation.

The Implementation Plan details the recommendations from the Final Assessment Report that are selected for implementation, identifies who is responsible for approving and acting on the recommendations, any action or follow-up that is required and 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 the Ontario Universities’ Council on Quality Assurance and is made available on a publicly accessible location on Western’s IQAP website. The Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan is the only document resulting from the Graduate cyclical review process that is made public, all other documents are confidential to the Program/School/Faculty and SUPR-G.

Executive Summary

The review committee met with members of program faculty and administrators including the current and former Graduate Chairs and graduate faculty in the MA Program in Theology, the
Dean of Theology, the Principal of Huron University College, and the Vice Provost and Associate Vice Provost of the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies. We visited the chapel and toured the library and met with the Director of Library and Learning Services and the Teaching and Learning Librarian for Theology, and with the Assistant to the Dean and Graduate Assistant. We met and spoke with the Assistant to the Dean and Graduate Assistant. We had a lunchtime meeting with current students representing all the ways of completing the program, including both full- and part-time students, students with academic and professional/vocational goals, and students in the standalone MA and in the combined MA/MDiv or MA/MTS. The strengths and challenges identified in the self-study report were consistent with those we heard about and observed. The External Consultants’ recommendations all concern issues of which the program is aware, and in several cases has already taken action. The Faculty and Program response agrees with the Consultants’ main points.

**Significant Strengths of the Program**

The following program strengths are identified in both the self-study and the External Consultants’ Report

- High quality of faculty with a healthy mix of established and upcoming research-active scholars in a range of research areas
- Students are very happy with the supervision they are receiving
- Demonstrated success of graduates in PhD programs or professional practice
- Program structure is appropriate to meet the learning outcomes in depth and breadth
- Clear, observable, and measurable program-level learning outcomes
- High level of commitment from the School of Graduate and Postdoctoral Studies, the Principal of Huron University College, and the Dean of Theology
- Good designated graduate student study space
- Effective library resources and highly competent and supportive librarians
- Adequate financial support for students

**Opportunities for Program Improvement and Enhancement**

The reviewers recommended that the following be considered

- Develop a clear Faculty and program vision and plan that aligns with Huron University College’s new Academic Plan; clarify the scope of the program (Christian tradition or more broad inclusion of Abrahamic and other traditions)
- Clarify the relationship of individual courses to the program-level learning outcomes
- The course load is high for Western thesis master’s programs; consider a non-thesis stream for students not considering further graduate study
- Revise the online Methodology course to a face-to-face model that provides an opportunity to interact with prospective supervisors and their research fields and methodologies
- Reconsider recruitment goals for program sustainability
- Develop a communication and recruitment strategy that highlights faculty profiles and student testimonies, increases program visibility to undergraduate students
- Consider assigning a provisional advisor at the outset
- Work toward more equitable distribution of supervisory loads
- Institute an annual progress review and report
- Evaluate the level of administrative support available to the program
**Summary of the Reviewers’ Key Recommendations and Department/Faculty Responses**

Identify and prioritize the recommendations listed in the External Consultants’ Report. Those recommendations that are approved for implementation will included in the Implementation Plan table. The recommendations that are approved for implementation will need to be addressed by the program showing evidence of completion in the next review or in a follow-up report to SUPR-G, if required.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Reviewer recommendation</th>
<th>Faculty response</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Necessary for program success</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Articulate a program vision</td>
<td>New academic plan in development</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revise the methodology course</td>
<td>Plan underway, to be implemented September 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clarify the relationship of individual courses to the program, map course- to program-level learning outcomes</td>
<td>To be completed following re-visioning process</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve oversight of student progress</td>
<td>Provisional advisors assigned at program entry for 2018; implementing annual progress reporting for end of Winter term 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Distribute supervisory responsibilities more equitably</td>
<td>Assignment of provisional advisors, involvement of a broad range of faculty in planned Methods course, both underway</td>
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<tr>
<td>2. Supplementary recommendations</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Consider a non-thesis stream</td>
<td>Stream and course load to be considered in planned re-visioning process</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate level of administrative support</td>
<td>Plan for development of a marketing and communications plan; central marketing and communications support is in place. Reassessment of administrative needs following re-visioning process.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Reconsider recruitment goals</td>
<td>Recruitment goals to be reconsidered and recruitment and retention strategy to be developed following program re-visioning</td>
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**Implementation Plan**

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action and/or follow-up. The Department Chair/Director, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty...
will be responsible for monitoring the Implementation Plan. The details of progress made will be presented in the Deans’ Annual Report.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Recommendation</th>
<th>Proposed Action and Follow-up</th>
<th>Responsibility</th>
<th>Timeline</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Articulate a program vision</td>
<td>Articulation of a vision for the Faculty and its programs aligned with Huron’s new vision</td>
<td>Dean, Graduate Chair, faculty, Principal</td>
<td>September 2019</td>
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<tr>
<td>Revise methods course</td>
<td>Evaluate success of initial changes to methods course and revise as needed</td>
<td>Graduate Chair</td>
<td>April 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Improve oversight of student progress</td>
<td>Evaluate success of new progress plan and revise as needed</td>
<td>Graduate Chair</td>
<td>April 2020</td>
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<tr>
<td>Consider program changes in response to the new vision</td>
<td>Re-evaluate program structure, recruitment goals, need for administrative support in relation to renewed vision; Clarify relationship of courses to the program learning outcomes</td>
<td>Graduate Chair, Dean, graduate committee</td>
<td>September 2021</td>
</tr>
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