

**FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT**  
**Institutional Quality Assurance Program (IQAP) Review**  
**History**  
**Undergraduate and Graduate Programs**

**Date of Review:** April 9 - 10, 2015

*In accordance with the University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response and assessments of the undergraduate and graduate programs delivered by the **Department of History**. This report identifies the significant strengths of the programs, together with opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, and it sets out and prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation.*

*The report includes an Implementation Plan that identifies who will be responsible for approving the recommendations set out in the Final Assessment Report; who will be responsible for providing any resources entailed by those recommendations; any changes in organization, policy or governance that will be necessary to meet the recommendations and who will be responsible for acting on those recommendations; and timelines for acting on and monitoring the implementation of those recommendations.*

**Executive Summary of the Cyclical Program Review of the  
Undergraduate and Graduate History Programs**

In accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Department of History submitted a self-study in February 2015 to the Associate Vice-President, Faculty and School of Graduate Studies to initiate the cyclical program review of its undergraduate and graduate programs. The approved self-study presented program descriptions, learning outcomes, and analyses of data provided by the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis. Appendices to the self-study contained all course outlines associated with the program and the CVs for each full-time member in the department.

Two arm's length external reviewers, one from Ontario and one from Quebec and one internal reviewer were endorsed by the Dean of Humanities, and selected by the Associate Vice-President, Faculty and Associate Vice President and Dean of Graduate Studies. The review team reviewed the self-study documentation and then conducted a site visit to McMaster University on April 9 – 10, 2015. The visit included interviews with the Provost and Vice-President (Academic); Associate Vice-President, Faculty, Associate Vice-President and Dean of Graduate Studies, Chair of the department and meetings with groups of current undergraduate and graduate students, full-time faculty and support staff.

The Chair of the department and the Dean of the Faculty of Humanities submitted responses to the Reviewers' Report (June 2015). Specific recommendations were discussed and clarifications and corrections were presented. Follow-up actions and timelines were included.

The Final Assessment Report was prepared by the QAC to be submitted to Undergraduate Council, Graduate Council and Senate (January 2017).

In their report (May 2015), the Review Team noted that the programs in History are strong ones, offered by a corps of dedicated and talented scholars and teachers. The Review Team highlighted that the department has a distinguished history, and enjoys excellent library and archival resources.

The following program strengths and areas for improvement were noted:

**Strengths**

The Review Team noted key strengths of the department and its program include the quality of each individual professor; the collective collegiality of the faculty; the resources of the Wilson Institute for Canadian History; and the ability to recruit students who are already in-course to stay with the department for a more intensive program.

**Areas for Improvement**

The Review Team’s report raised some concerns that the faculty complement is shrinking with recent retirements and further ones impending. The report noted that the immediate challenges are: undergraduate recruitment in the face of declining enrolments and the faculty complement in the face of impending retirements and the way this connects with the shape and future of the graduate program.

The Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, in consultation with the Chair of the Department of History shall be responsible for monitoring the recommendations implementation plan. The details of the progress made will be presented in the 18-month Follow Up Report and filed in the Associate Vice-President, Faculty’s office and the School of Graduate Studies.

**Summary of the Reviewers’ Recommendations with the Department’s and the Dean’s Responses**

**Recommendations for Undergraduate Program**

Recommendation	Proposed Follow-Up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
Reconsider decision to introduce Level 1 seminars, in light of the resource commitment it involves	Review the Level 1 seminars after they have been given a proper trial run of three years. Faculty will encourage Department to consider alternative modes of delivering such a course, such as in a larger active learning	Department	Within 2 years

	classroom		
Ensure instructors are familiar with and adopt “inquiry” methods in courses		Department	Within 2 years
Experiment with a popular Level I course, such as “History of the internet”, both to increase service teaching and as a way of recruiting more students to the program	Review the success of the relatively new Level I lecture courses	Department	Within 2 years
More service courses, given the nature of the budget model	Introduce a new Level II course that is both traditional and innovative – The Second World War: A Global History – as a service course Willingness to develop online courses	Department	Ongoing review of service teaching
Increase offerings in non-western history and in western history prior to the modern era	Associate Dean to work with the department to ensure some balance in course offerings and encourage the department to review its course list requirements	Department and Associate Dean	Within 18 months
Expansion of the history practicum and offerings in digital humanities	Ongoing review of Practicum and Digital Humanities in curriculum. Open to practicums History instructors have been learning more about Digital Humanities and are incorporating those skills into their courses, which seems a better strategy than	Department	Review progress in 18 months

	segregating such skills in special courses		
Review the impact of the separation of the Faculties of Humanities and Social Sciences on recruitment in History, noting for example, the unusually small proportion of students combining History and Political Science compared to at other institutions	There is no formal impediment to Combined Honours with disciplines in Social Sciences and such combinations are encouraged. The Dean has brought this concern to the attention of the Task Force struck by the Provost and the Deans of Humanities, Science and Social Sciences to consider such issues	Dean, as part of response to Task Force	Next 12 – 24 months
Improve website as one recruitment initiative	Faculty of Humanities is set to launch a new Content Management System website which will allow Departments to more easily make changes and update their website. The Dean’s Office will encourage the department to review its content	Department and Dean	Over next 6 – 12 months as website launches
Review faculty complement	Dean will work with the Chair and the Department on strategic complement planning	Dean and Department	Ongoing review of faculty complement requirements in 12, 24, 36 months

**Recommendations for Graduate Programs**

<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Proposed Follow-Up</b>	<b>Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up</b>	<b>Timeline for Addressing Recommendation</b>
Review quality of the applicants to the graduate program and the ability of the department to support	Department has been modifying the program (recent abolition of doctoral fields and further proposed	Department	Review effectiveness over next 2 – 3 years

<p>program growth</p>	<p>changes that will do away with a comprehensive examination in order to move students more quickly to the dissertation) in a variety of ways to give the department a competitive advantage</p>		
<p>Emphasize particular expertise of faculty members so that graduate students will focus on the benefits of a wider committee</p>	<p>Department has made appointments so as to strengthen its specialization in the British world as well as various thematic areas Dean will recommend that the department do more to highlight the depth it has in those areas</p>	<p>Department</p>	<p>Ongoing efforts to emphasize particular strengths</p>

**Quality Assurance Committee Recommendation**

McMaster's Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) reviewed the above documentation and recommends that the program should follow the regular course of action with an 18-month follow-up report and a subsequent full external cyclical review to be conducted no later than 8 years after the start of the last review.