

Final Assessment Report

Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) Review
Cognitive Science of Language and Linguistics Undergraduate Programs

Date of Review: April 19 - 20, 2012

Review Team Members: Dr. Marc Joanisse, University of Western Ontario
Dr. Diane Massam, University of Toronto
Dr. Shayne Clarke, McMaster University

Summary:

The Review Committee stated that they found the Department of Linguistics and Languages to offer exciting, dynamic programs that are innovative and forward-looking in design. The report commended the Department members for their tremendous energy, collegiality, and goodwill and highlighted that the programs are a credit to McMaster, and student and faculty satisfaction is high. The Reviewers went on to say that the program offerings are also unique among those offered by linguistics departments in the region, focusing on core linguistic curricular coverage combined with exciting experimental and interdisciplinary topics. It was noted that the department offers one-stop shopping for language sciences to students with a range of interests. The report also outlined that the Department generally makes good use of existing resources, has appropriate admission requirements, a viable system of governance, and it provides a developed set of academic services.

The Review Committee noted that in the transition to a research-intensive department, some challenges to sustainability are evident, particularly in the areas of core theory and language instruction. It was suggested that some of these issues can be addressed by curricular tightening, creative modes of course delivery, and by additional teaching assistant/sessional support, although additional faculty positions would ultimately be desirable. The Reviewers suggested that with regard to language instruction, immediate attention is required to resolve issues of accessibility for the Minor programs and for the language requirements within the Major programs, but suggested that this should be done in the context of a clear strategic direction regarding the role of languages at McMaster University.

The Department and the Faculty of Humanities agree that they will need strategic new hires to maintain the current level of excellence.

Following a review of the IQAP Reviewers Report, the Chair's response and the Dean's response, the Quality Assurance Committee is satisfied with the quality of the program. However, it does recommend that, in the 18 month report, the Chair and Dean address any progress made on the long-term viability of the language curriculum and on the issue of faculty teaching assignments.

Recommendation	Implementation Plan
Reduce breadth of courses and focus on core	Pursue strategic faculty hiring, while recognizing

areas of syntax, semantics and morphology to reduce teaching loads

the importance of also supporting cognitive science and psycholinguistics