

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Institutional Quality Assurance Program (IQAP) Review

Philosophy (B.A., M.A., Ph.D.) and Justice, Philosophy and Political Law

Date of Review: March 12 - 13, 2018

*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 **Philosophy undergraduate and graduate** programs delivered by the Philosophy Department. 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 Review

In accordance with the Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), the Philosophy department submitted a self-studies in February 2018 to the Vice-Provost, Faculty and Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies to initiate the cyclical program review of its undergraduate and graduate programs. The approved self-studies presented program descriptions, learning outcomes, and analyses of data provided by the Office of Institutional Research and Analysis. Appendices to the self-studies 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 Baltimore and one from New York and one internal reviewer were endorsed by the Dean, Faculty of Humanities, and selected by the Vice-Provost, Faculty and Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies. The review team reviewed the self-study documentation and then conducted a site visit to McMaster University on March 12 - 13, 2018. The visit included interviews with the Provost and Vice-President (Academic); Vice-Provost, Faculty, Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, Departmental Chair 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 (May 2019). Specific recommendations were discussed and clarifications and corrections were presented. Follow-up actions and timelines were included.

Strengths

In their report (April 2018), the Review team noted that in general, the Philosophy program as a whole is strong, vibrant, and academically healthy. The report highlighted that the program is a model of success that warrants continuing and increasing support by University Administration, a conclusion that University stakeholders seem to recognize already. The report further noted that the rigor of the self-assessments spoke to the quality and reach of the programs' achievements.

Areas of Improvement

In their report, the Review Team identified some recommendations for areas of improvement including:

Undergraduate

- Reliance on sessionals and CLA's in recent years is evidence that the department is understaffed, creating constraints on enrollment growth and quality

Graduate

- Clarifying the rationale and objective of the Ph.D. seminar;
- Improving the communication between graduate students and faculty;
- Increased support of graduate students applying for non-academic employment and;
- Reducing the teaching of courses that have both undergraduate and graduate students (so-called "4/6 courses").

The Dean of the Faculty of Humanities, in consultation with the Chair of the department shall be responsible for monitoring the recommendations outlined in the implementation plan. The details of the progress made will be presented in the progress report and filed in the Vice-Provost, Faculty's office.

Summary of the Reviewers' Recommendations with the Department's and Dean's Responses

Implementation Plan

Recommendation to Preserve Strength of Undergraduate Programs	Proposed Follow-Up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
The reviewers found that additional tenure-stream faculty are necessary	The Department agrees with this recommendation and its basis. A crucial further point is that the department's tenure-	The Chair is tasked with initiating a discussion with the	To comply with this recommendation, the additional faculty searches must be

<p>to enable further enrollment growth and quality enhancement and to preserve existing strengths in the undergraduate programs given the nine-unit (six of which take effect in 2018-19) commitment of faculty resources per year to the IBH program (Reviewer's Report, 21)</p>	<p>track faculty complement for academic year 2020-21 is projected to be even smaller than the 2017-18 complement of 12.5 FTE tenure track faculty that the reviewers found to be understaffed. Two members of the 2017-18 complement are no longer with the department. A third member is now ½ time and in the first year of a three-year transition to retirements. Another staff member will be retired as of July 1, 2019 and a further staff member (currently ½ time) will be fully retired as of July 1, 2020. The department is in the process of hiring two tenure-track faculty members for the 2019-20 academic year. In sum (including the two new hires), the department tenure-track faculty complement for 2020-21 is projected to be only 10.5 FTE – i.e. 2 FTE smaller than the 'understaffed' 2017-18 complement. Thus minimal compliance with the reviewers' recommendation requires no less than three further tenure-track faculty searches in the 2019-20 academic year for faculty whose positions would begin in the 2020-21 academic year. This would result in a TT faculty complement of 13.5 for 2020-21 one FTE larger than the 2017-18 complement.</p>	<p>Dean on this matter.</p>	<p>conducted in 2018-20, and any such search will likely need to be authorized in 2018-19.</p>
<p>A reduction in the teaching load of CLAs from a 4-4 to a 3-3, with increased research and service obligations. (Reviewer's Report, 21)</p>	<p>The department agrees with this recommendation and will continue to advocate for this change so long as the department continues to rely on CLA support. The department's main concerns are that the 4-4 teaching load</p>	<p>The Chair, Stefan Sciaraffa, is tasked with initiating a discussion with the Dean on this matter.</p>	<p>This will require negotiation and discussion the academic year prior to the commencement of the CLA in question.</p>

	significantly impedes the CLA's career development and undercuts CLA morale. Moreover, it makes it difficult for the CLA to contribute regularly to the intellectual and research life of the departments' community of faculty and graduate students.		
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JPPL Program Recommendations for Enhancement	Proposed Follow-Up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
A 3rd year sequence that parallels the 2nd year JPPL only sequence. This would further foster the development of an intellectual community among the JPPL students.	To execute this plan, we would need a faculty complement significantly larger than the present complement. Although it is a good idea, this enhancement would not be one of our first priorities if feasible.	N/A	N/A
More uniformity between sections of 'core' JPPL courses.	The department does not agree that greater uniformity of content across different sections of the same core courses would amount to an enhancement of the program. Such an effort risks impeding the pedagogical creativity and instructor autonomy that we believe is essential to strong undergraduate teaching.	N/A	N/A
Students expressed concern that too many courses are scheduled at conflicting times.	The department will redouble its efforts to ensure that students can easily navigate the JPPL requirements during their three years of courses.	The Chair in consultation with the curriculum committee and Office Coordinator	The course management and timetabling process that takes place each year
Although the JPPL major lists many courses on the interdisciplinary course list, few of the courses are	The department will reassess its interdisciplinary offerings and the structure of the interdisciplinary requirement.	The JPPL Advisor, Stefan Sciaraffa, in consultation with the Department Curriculum Committee.	This reassessment will take place over the course of the 2018-19 and 2019-20 academic years.

available for students to take in any particular year. Substantially revisiting the options on this list would be beneficial.			
More tenure-stream faculty in the third year, fewer sessional and CLA instructors.	The department agrees with this recommendation, but unless faculty resources are significantly increased, there is little that we can do to implement this enhancement.	N/A	N/A
Increase the current program cap of 60 students per year.	We could significantly increase the size of the program—perhaps from the current 60/year to 80-90 students per year—given current levels of student demand. The department would be inclined to do so, but simply cannot with current faculty resources. The current cap of 60 is difficult to manage with current faculty resources. Note further that the department set this cap of 60 when its tenure-track faculty complement was 14 FTE (significantly larger than the 10.5 currently projected for 2020-21). See JPPL Self-Study, 2012. In short, increasing the cap for JPPL would require significantly larger faculty complement than we presently have or project to have in the short term.	N/A	N/A

BA Honours Program Recommendations for Enhancement	Proposed Follow-Up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up	Timeline for Addressing Recommendation
A 2nd year course sequence for BA Honours that parallels the JPPL	The department agrees with this recommendation. The department has enlisted	James Sikkema and the Department Chair, Stefan Sciaraffa.	This assessment and restructuring will take place over the course of the 2018-

Honours 2nd year sequence.	the aid of CLA and Assistant Professor James Sikkema to restructure two-second year courses, Early Modern I and Early Modern II to meet this need.		19 and 2019-20 academic years.
The students in this program would benefit from more support for their extracurricular activities, such as an enhanced Philosophy Club, through faculty and/or graduate student leadership, and opportunities to serve as an undergraduate Teaching Assistant.	The department endorses this recommendation. As part of his increased service obligations pursuant to a reduction of the standard 4-4 course load, Dr. Sikkema is spearheading our efforts to help build a cohesive intellectual community among our Phil BA Honours students by introducing a number of extracurricular opportunities.	James Sikkema and the Department Chair, Stefan Sciaraffa.	This assessment and restructuring will take place over the course of the 2018-19 and 2019-20 academic years.
Market the major more effectively early on.	We endorse this recommendation as well. Here too, we've asked Dr. Sikkema to help organize our efforts in this regard.	James Sikkema and the Department Chair, Stefan Sciaraffa.	This assessment and restructuring will take place over the course of the 2018-19 and 2019-20 academic years.

Implementation Plan for Four Recommendations Regarding the MA and PhD Philosophy Programs

Graduate Programs Recommendations for Improvement	Proposed Follow-Up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up	Timeline for Addressing Recommendations
The primary recommendation is that the Department develop more intentional and systematic activities of professional development for doctoral students, staged across each level of graduate education.	The Department is developing a set of six or so 90-minute professionalization workshops that will run parallel to the PhD seminar over the course of the academic year but will be available to all students enrolled in our program. These workshops will cover a variety of different topics, including: conference-paper methodology and standards; journal article	The chair, Stefan Sciaraffa, and the PhD advisor, Mark Johnstone, are spearheading these initiatives.	We are implementing the proposed changes over the 2018-19 academic year and then we will, upon consultation with the graduate students, consider further refinements.

	methodology and standards; preparing for the academic job market; preparing for the nonacademic job market; teaching, and community engagement.		
Further integration of IEPI with the Philosophy Department is advisable in light of the immediately foregoing recommendation.	The department is considering developing a new PhD. Program or Stream designed to integrate graduate teaching and training at IEPI into the departmental curricular offerings.	The chair, Stefan Sciaraffa, and Assistant Professor (CLA) Matt Grellette have been tasked with organizing the department's deliberations and research with respect to these possibilities.	We expect to settle on a plan for such curricular developments by January of 2019 and then over the next year to apply for approval with the relevant oversight body.
Improving the communication between graduate students and faculty.	To this end as well as the end of boosting graduate morale in general and increasing greater transparency in departmental decisions, the department has implemented a monthly meeting between the graduate students and the Chair of the Department and the PhD advisor. During this meeting the Chair and PhD advisor update the graduates on various Departmental developments and the graduate students are invited to bring graduate activities, initiatives and matters of concern to the attention of the Chair and PhD advisor. There is an expectation that the three graduate representatives (elected yearly) will attend each monthly meeting, and all graduate students are encouraged to attend.	The Department Chair and PhD Advisor.	This initiative has been implemented and will be further developed in consultation with the graduate students.
Support of graduate students applying for non-academic	The Department recognizes the need to improve this area of graduate student training.	The Department Chair will coordinate the two	We plan to have the Two professionalization

<p>employment.</p>	<p>We plan to deliver at one professionalization workshop that deals specifically with this issue, calling on the resources of Claudia Emerson. Dr. Emerson is the director of the Institute for Ethics and Policy for Innovation. Much of her work is in the capacity as a consultant to policymakers and research scientists on matters of ethics and policy. As a result, she is keenly aware of the unique skills that philosophy MA and PhD graduates can bring to the professional sector as analysts and consultants. The Department is also in the process of putting together a database of graduate students who have obtained non-academic employment on the strength of their graduate training in philosophy. We plan to initiate a workshop that would bring students in drawn from this database. A further idea would be to make these graduates contact information available to our current graduate students.</p>	<p>workshops and the Chair will oversee the Department administrative staff's supplementation of the database. The Department will also seek to construct a small committee of graduates to help implement and provide further guidance regarding these initiatives.</p>	<p>workshops this academic year (2018-19). We have a rudimentary database of non-academic graduates that we plan to continue developing.</p>
<p>Reducing the teaching of courses that have both undergraduate and graduate students (so-called "4/6 courses").</p>	<p>The Department agrees that it should significantly reduce the number of mixed courses. For the 2018-19 academic year the department has scheduled only three 4/6 offerings that supplement our eleven 700-level graduate-student only seminars. To the degree resources allow, the Department will limit 4/6 offerings to those instances in which the Department judges that the split-arrangement</p>	<p>The Department Chair and Curriculum Committee.</p>	<p>This effort must be sustained on a year-to year basis.</p>

	would equally or better serve the pedagogical interests of graduate and undergraduate students than would separate courses for each group of students.		
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Graduate Programs Recommendation for Enhancement	Proposed Follow-Up	Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up	Timeline for Addressing Recommendations
MA Program Students would like a research seminar in their second year.	MA students' main task during the second year is the writing of a substantial MA Thesis. The department's view is that this Thesis drive MA Program is pedagogically sound and a proven success. The department worries that the introduction of a 2nd year MA research seminar would interfere with the students' progress. For this reason, we do not plan to heed this recommendation.	N/A	N/A
Clarify the purpose of the PhD seminar and move the seminar to a later year (currently the seminar is required of 2nd year PhD students), with a focus on professional development, such as a required paper submission to a refereed academic journal, a professional talk, or some other activity that directly enhances preparation for the job market.	The faculty has engaged in ongoing consultation with the PhD students regarding this issue. At present, we do not plan to move the seminar to a later stage of the PhD program. Rather, we first will implement the better-focused 2nd year version and then revisit the issue at the end of the year, with consultation from the current year's graduate students. We have clarified that the seminar objective is as follows: To produce a new work with the ultimate goal of developing it as a conference paper and, perhaps, ultimately a journal submission. The main pedagogical goal is to provide the student with a clear	The Chair (Stefan Sciaraffa), PhD Advisor (Mark Johnstone) and faculty member delivering the PhD seminar (Brigitte Sassen).	We are implementing the proposed changes over the 2018-19 academic year and then we will, upon consultation with the graduate students, consider further refinements.

	understanding of how to construct a piece of philosophical work for presentation at conferences and, ultimately, a publication in a peer-reviewed journal.		
Enhanced mentoring of doctoral students via the office of the PhD Advisor, putting plans into place to help alleviate stress and anxiety of the doctoral students, and greater transparency in the SSHRC graduate fellowship decision making process.	The Department PhD advisor already bears a tremendous administrative burden, and our graduate supervisors by and large spend a tremendous amount of time with their PhD students. Moreover, the department is not sure about the what further mentoring the doctoral students have in mind or what further steps can be taken to relieve the stress and anxiety of the students. Thus, we would like to gather more information. To this end as well as the end of boosting graduate morale in general and increasing greater transparency in departmental decisions, the department has implemented a monthly meeting between the graduate students and the Chair of the Department and the PhD advisor. During this meeting the Chair and PhD advisor update the graduates on various Departmental developments and the graduate students are invited to bring graduate activities, initiatives and matters of concern to the attention of the Chair and PhD advisor. There is an expectation that the three graduate representatives (elected yearly) will attend each monthly meeting, and all graduate students are encouraged to attend.	The Department Chair and PhD Advisor.	This initiative has been implemented and will be further developed in consultation with the graduate students.
The introduction of an applied ethics MA or PhD program	The department is considering developing a new PhD. Program or Stream designed to integrate	The chair, Stefan Sciaraffa, and Assistant	We expect to settle on a plan for such curricular

	graduate teaching and training at IEPI into the departmental curricular offerings.	Professor (CLA) Matt Grellette have been tasked with organizing the department's deliberations and research with respect to these possibilities.	developments by January of 2019 and then over the next year to apply for approval with the relevant oversight body.
Graduate students appear to treat the Friday colloquium as optional – as an “add on” to their graduate education. This seems like a missed opportunity for professional development in the graduate program. One enhancement would be to use the Friday colloquium to support a culture of professional development for graduate students.	The department faculty repeatedly stresses to the graduate students that regular attendance at the department colloquia is expected and an important component of their graduate professionalization. We will continue to do so. We do not believe it would be the best use of faculty resources to incorporate and invigilate this requirement within the structure of a seminar.	N/A	N/A

Dean’s Response, Faculty of Humanities:

The Dean thanks the Review team and the Department for their thorough and constructive approach to the graduate and undergraduate programs in the Department of Philosophy. The Dean was pleased that the report emphasized the strength and dynamism of the department, and that the reviewers admired our distinctive undergraduate offering in Justice, Political Philosophy and Law.

The Dean noted that he supports the Department’s thoughtful response to the small number of constructive recommendations made about its core programs. They have already undertaken several initiatives in response to some of the comments that the reviewers heard from students. The Dean offered only a few additional comments.

Faculty Complement

The Dean shares concerns of the Department and the reviewers that we need to sustain the faculty complement, although the Department’s detailed accounting is off by one. At the time of the review in 2017-18, the Department had 11.5 tenure faculty, 1 special appointment and 2 CLAs; by 2020-21, the

Department will have 13.5 tenure faculty and at least 1 CLA. The Dean's recommendation to the next Dean is contained in his current budget plan, and includes another hire in 2021-22, which with retirements would result in their being 14 tenure faculty and at least 1 CLA.

The Dean further noted that in the Faculty of Humanities, many departments have faced and are facing retirements without replacement; it is testament to the success of the Department that the Dean is at least trying to keep up with retirements/resignations. Undoubtedly, the Department might be able to grow the JPPL program with one or two more faculty members, but the benefits of increasing the size of the cohort are less clear when overall domestic enrolments are capped, and adding to the faculty complement is more challenging given the uncertain funding climate, and when the needs of other departments and programs must be addressed.

Teaching Assignment of CLAs

The Dean acknowledged that the reviewers express concern over the teaching assignment of CLAs. The precise teaching assignment is a matter of negotiation, both with prospective candidates and with the Department. The standard 24 units is a starting point for a teaching-intensive CLA, but Departments frequently argue that other expectations or the nature of the courses to be offered justifies a reduction in the assignment to 21 or 18 units. The Dean noted that none of the three CLAs in the Department in 2018-19 had a 4-4 teaching assignment.

Quality Assurance Committee Recommendations

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