

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Institutional Quality Assurance Program (IQAP) Review

Anthropology (Graduate and Undergraduate programs)

Date of Review: March 5th and 6th, 2024

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 offered by Anthropology. This report identifies the significant strengths of the program, 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 Anthropology department submitted a self-study in February 2024 to the Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning and Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies to initiate the cyclical program review of its program. 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 the CVs for each full-time member in the department.

Two arm's length external reviewers and one internal reviewer were endorsed by the Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, and selected by the Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning 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 5th and 6th, 2024. The review included interviews with the Deputy Provost; Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning and Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, Associate Dean, Grad Studies and Research, Chair of the department, and meetings with groups of current students, full-time faculty and support staff.

The Chair of the Department of the program and the Dean of the Faculty of Social Sciences submitted responses to the Reviewers' Report (October 2024). Specific recommendations were discussed and clarifications and corrections were presented. Follow-up actions and timelines were included.

Strengths

- Students have positive evaluations of faculty expertise and attitudes and report good learning experiences
- Administrative staff at all levels are highly appreciated and recognized as engaged, effective and knowledgeable; their work is seen as an essential component of the reigning atmosphere of positivity in the department
- The positive department culture is also based on a sense of shared mission amongst faculty and support for student learning and social events to foster community
- The unique three stream approach at the undergraduate and graduate levels is both a strength and a challenge; it is working especially well at the undergraduate level. Students and faculty are aware of issues at the graduate level and engaged in discussion to address them.
- There are robust course offerings at the undergraduate level and evident student satisfaction with the three streams approach.
- There is a commitment to decolonization in the department including: decolonizing the curriculum (the Department established its own Equity Diversity Inclusion and Indigenous Strategies (EDIIS) committee in 2021 composed of faculty and graduate students to support faculty in developing syllabi and teaching strategies); intentions to attend to proper management of archaeological, bioarcheological, and ethnographic collections; commitment and action to renew relationships with local First Nations; and strong support for the new Indigenous Studies Department
- There is clear recognition and strong agreement on which central services issues are problematic for the department and individual faculty workload (MSAF, SAS, Communications, and Central Advising)

Opportunities for Improvement and Enhancement, including appropriateness of resources

- Lab Spaces are inadequate for teaching (hampering hands-on learning), include aged equipment, are inaccessible, and unsafe
- Archaeology stream has suffered significant faculty losses which has weakened teaching at graduate and undergraduate level and could impact the Department's reputation in this area
- Archaeological, biological, and ethnographic collections are inadequately, and in the case of human remains, unethically stored; there is great untapped potential for teaching in the labs once issues of space, associated resources, and management of collections are resolved.
- The three streams approach of our department is a unique strength and a challenge which requires periodic reflection and creative tinkering.

- Some challenges with ‘apprenticeship model’ (experiential education) of learning at the graduate level; appears to work better for bio-archaeology and archaeology than for sociocultural, with the creation of intellectual space for co-authored conference presentations and publications with the supervisor/lab group.
- Some student learning objectives may be left unmet with only 4 required courses in the PhD degree and no unifying mandatory Theory and Method course; the small number of courses offered each term may be inadequate to fulfill student needs.
- Directed reading courses which have become essential in delivering the graduate program curriculum, may in practice not meet student needs
- Greater cohort cohesion and stronger finish to the Honours degree might be accomplished by a required Honours Thesis or 4th year capstone

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

Recommendation #1:

Undergraduate Program

1.a) Consider a required Honours Thesis or 4th year Capstone in the program that involves an independent research project.

1.b) Discuss moving forward with the idea of a 3 fields Food Studies minor

1. c) Explore ways to expand field schools including field schools in all three sub-disciplines, and look at alternate structures such as half-day field schools; or two-days a week field schools to increase accessibility for students with financial constraints who must work through summer months

Department’s Response and Actions to be Taken:

1.a) Honours thesis/4th year capstone: The department feels that we do not currently have the capacity for this option at the current time, particularly as it might undermine enrolments in our 4th year courses (which sometimes are underenrolled) and would be difficult to teach a course across the sub-disciplinary areas. Unlike some departments, we already have an ideal pathway involving independent studies and the Undergraduate Student Research Apprenticeship (USRA) program: students often take a reading course with a faculty member, then apply for a USRA with the scholarship as background. One option to be explored, however, is a six-unit two term independent study, term 1 being research, term 2 being writing of the thesis. (Such a model is fairly common in other programs)

ACTION: The undergraduate committee will explore the option of back-to-back independent studies and ways that faculty member may be able to gain credit for such work.

1.b) We agree with the reviewers that this is a good option to pursue.

ACTION: The undergrad chair, undergraduate administrative assistant and department manager are in the process of putting together a submission for this year's curriculum meeting. (While the title has not yet been decided, the minor may be called something like "Food, nutrition, and environmental health and well-being", as a way to include courses on food and nutrition, and environmental histories). This effort should help expand our course offerings, support existing courses (that can then be run on a more regular basis (e.g., Dr Yong's Cultural Politics of Food & Eating, ANTHROP 4CP3) and pick up students from across the faculty, and university, given McMaster's focus on health studies, and contemporary concerns for food security

1.c) While we recognize how expanding field schools would be a useful strategy, we are currently under resourced (in terms of faculty and budgets) for this to be developed in the immediate future, but are open for longer term discussion.

ACTION: Implement the new collaborative archaeological field school in 2024, with the aim of once again involving students from Wilfred Laurier to ensure sustainability. Revisit the possibilities of a bioarchaeology field school. Encourage discussions at the sociocultural scale for other experiential opportunities. Annual information session run by the faculty to help students find pertinent field schools and other forms of experiential education, drawing on our global network of connections in the academic and professional (CRM) realm.

This year's curriculum presentation includes the creation of an Anthropology BA(Hons) Co-Op degree, part of a co-op expansion program at the Faculty level. This process involves minimal extra work for the Department, but is envisaged as a key recruitment tool, providing paid internship opportunities for students over three terms of an expanded five-year degree. A Faculty of Social Sciences 'talent scout' is meeting with us in the winter term to detail professional connections within our field so that internships can be established for our students.

Dean's Response:

1.a: Independent Study. Given the resources constraints, it is simply not feasible to require an independent honours thesis or independent capstone research experience. A number of our programs offer capstone courses in which student undertake research projects either individually or in small groups. If the department judges it important to create additional research opportunities for students beyond those already available to students, I encourage the department to consider such an approach.

1.b: Agree.

1.c: Field school opportunities should perhaps be brought more explicitly within the framework of experiential learning, which then makes it more amenable to the support and assistance of the Faculty's Careers and Experiential Experience program. The creation of the co-op option within the Anthropology program will aid in this. But in addition to co-op, the Faculty has for many years offered internships opportunities and other placement opportunities for all undergraduate social science students. It will be important for Anthropology to work with the staff of the experiential learning office to identify placement opportunities in the community suitable for anthropology students.

Recommendation #2:

Graduate Program

2.a) Consider adding a required Theory and Method course to both MA Thesis and PhD degrees to address concerns about gaps in knowledge not filled by the apprenticeship model.

2.b) Consider designing a unique three-stream course, possibly team taught. Seek a model for team teaching to 'count' within workload model at the Department and University level.

2.c) Make modest but pointed revisions to the Comprehensive Exam process to ensure a consistent approach amongst faculty regarding list preparation, meeting time with committee beforehand, timely marking, and meaningful feedback. Ensure no student is made to write Comp 2 without adequate debrief and feedback on Comp 1

2.d) Look for ways within the apprenticeship model of teaching at the graduate level to level the playing field so that more graduate students have access to independent reading courses with their supervisors and faculty do not experience them as an invisible workload burden

2.e) Continue to press for funding for international students when supervisors do not have large external grants or lab-based projects (a situation more common in sociocultural anthropology

2.f) Continue the practice of early review of graduate program applications and early offers

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:

2.a) A joint Method and Theory course, which would be required for all incoming graduate students, has long been discussed in the department. The department is in consensus that we do not wish to implement a joint Method and Theory course that would be required for all graduate students. We are confident that we have sufficiently integrated a three-fields approach to our best ability (wherein all our students become familiar with the kinds of questions, theories, methods, and approaches taken by the respective subfields) through other avenues in our graduate experience. For example, all first-year graduate students are required to attend our annual speaker series' colloquia, which feature a diversity of scholars from all three subfields from week to week. Further, all first-year students enrol in our required Professionalization Development Workshop, taught by the Graduate Chair. The workshop sees students building community, cohesion, and learning—through hands on activities and topical foci such as grant writing, preparing for conferences, networking, crafting a research proposal, conducting a literature review, and so on. In the context of the workshop, students are exposed to colleagues' subfield expertise and familiarized with the broad scope of three-fields questions, methods, and theories our department hosts. We do not wish to require a Theory and Method course for our graduate students considering the low number of courses (4 for PhD students, 6 for MA students) they must complete; the current model enables students to hone their theoretical and methodological interests in communities of practice that are situated more firmly in their respective subfields, which is crucial in a program with few required courses.

ACTION: No action.

2.b) We have been building up “three-stream” graduate courses over the past number of years and several of our offerings have been renamed or reorganized to attract a diversity of students from across the subfields. For instance, Dr. Brickley renamed her biological anthropology course more broadly to attract a wider audience of students: “Past Perspectives on Health”. As the reviewers point out, our “Writing the Field” course is quite popular among all subfield students. Bodies, Politics, Data has also regularly attracted students from across the three fields. Dr. Wissler will be initiating her three-stream quantitative course this year. While joint courses would be of potential value to the department, this would require team-teaching, for which there are currently limited material supports. For team-teaching to work, our faculty members would expect to receive full teaching credit for any team-taught course, given the time commitment, planning, design, and engagement required; we are confident this workload is equivalent to the time and energy given to a single instructor course and should be recognized as such.

ACTION: The department will explore how other departments do team-teaching (if they do). We will also consider capitalizing on the diversity of subfield approaches in the department by inviting colleagues to do brief guest visits to graduate classes, when relevant. In designing courses, all faculty members continue to be mindful of ways to ensure their course content is of interest and relevance to as many of our three subfield students as possible, within reason (given some graduate courses may feature specialized methods).

2. c) Our comprehensive exams were subjected to an intensive review in the past several years by our graduate committee. Many of the suggestions and improvements that emerged from that exercise are now embedded into the protocols and guidelines for comprehensive exams, clearly articulated in the Department Graduate Handbook. The graduate committee recently re-designed the comprehensive exams evaluation forms for supervisory committee members, making explicit the expected ‘type’ of feedback required for each component (Coverage of content/critical analysis, organization/structure, style, other comments). Beneath each of these sub-sections, the reviewer is provided with numerous prompts to aid them in providing meaningful and thorough feedback. In the 2023-24 academic year, two faculty members took well beyond the timeline of three weeks allotted to provide feedback on student exams; the two students in question did not receive feedback before beginning the second exam. On one occasion, a faculty member provided minimal and non-substantive feedback. In these cases, the graduate chair spoke with both faculty members to remind them of their obligations and departmental expectations for feedback and timeliness.

ACTION: The Graduate Chair will ensure that faculty members (supervisor and supervisory committee members) are providing timely and substantive feedback on: 1) Outlines for comps; and 2) Comprehensive exam evaluation forms. When new faculty members are hired into the department, the Graduate Chair will ensure they are briefed on the comprehensive exams process and expectations for timeliness and nature of feedback on outlines and exams.

2. d) While we understand student demand for independent study courses, given faculty workload

and increased demands on faculty members' time and energy, increasing the number of independent study courses is not possible. In a departmental discussion around the IQAP report, we have come to the consensus that independent study courses at the graduate level are meant to be 'stop gap' measures and measures of last resort if a student's specialist interests require individualized attention and cultivation in the context of such a one-on-one course. This will be clarified in upcoming edits to the department graduate handbook, so that equity concerns are addressed.

ACTION: The department will work towards clearer messaging around the value of taking a breadth of courses even if they are not exactly aligned with students' interests, something we believe to be true. Faculty members will continue to work to develop courses that enable students of all subfields to 'use' the assignments toward their own developing research interests or program milestones (i.e., comps, proposals, grants). There are rare occasions, given the stochastic and unpredictable nature of graduate admissions (and the potential for there to be, say, a single student in a subfield in any given year), where a student may need to, with the aid of their supervisor, explore options beyond an independent study to fulfill training needs for the subfield. For instance, our department will consider, in such rare cases, allowing an extra independent study in year one for such students, via a mechanism of the student enrolling in a pertinent undergraduate-level class and producing graduate-level assignments evaluated by the supervisor.

2. e) International funding has long been an issue in the department.

ACTION: We will continue to press for funding but are *very* cognizant of budgetary constraints. There was previously a welcome Faculty of Social Sciences international initiative to support one international student per year but that has been paused. Further, recent caps on international student study permits also constrain our ability to make progress on this front. We will continue to voice our concerns about the lack of international student funding in forums such as the Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee (GCPC) and the Graduate Council. Given McMaster's emphasis on internationalization, we will continue to press the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) and the Faculty of Social Sciences (FSS) as to why funding international students is not a priority. The Graduate Chair will explore with other departments in FSS and beyond how they go about funding international students.

2. f) The early review of graduate program applications has been a remarkable success in the department and is being explored now in other departments.

ACTION: We will continue this practice, which was developed and implemented by our staff.

Dean's Response:

2.a: The department is committed to a three-field approach, has thought carefully about how to integrate it into its programming, and worked very hard to implement it effectively. I support the decision of the program to not pursue this specific recommendation.

2.b: It is infeasible and unrealistic to receive credit as a sole instructor when team teaching a course. Such an approach would double or triple the cost of offering a course. Team teaching does happen in a number of programs in the Faculty using a model in which faculty receive partial credit pro-rated relative to being the sole instructor for a course. Faculty sometimes express concern about how partial credit can be integrated into the overall accounting for educational contribution, it is easily handled by making multi-year commitments to a team-taught course, e.g., two-person teams teach

for an even number of offerings, those in three-person teams commit to three offerings, etc. Further, and more generally, the greater is the amount of team teaching in a program, the easier it is to accommodate such concerns.

2.c: The department has devoted considerable effort to its comprehensive exam process and the proposed actions should address the underlying concern.

2.d: Current resource constraints make it infeasible to offer a large number of independent study courses in which the faculty member receives full teaching credit. The department's approach is appropriate to explore alternative solutions when a student is faced with a need for training not offered through an existing course.

2.e: International funding for graduate students has been a challenge since such funding was discontinued by the province in the mid-1990s. As noted, the Faculty did introduce a very modest program of support for international students a few years ago. The resources devoted to that program were re-allocated starting last year to finance an increased funding floor for PhD students, which was judged by many in the Faculty to be a more pressing issue. It is important to also acknowledge that both the Faculty of Social Sciences and the School of Graduate Studies have increased support for international students in a less visible way through their allocation formulae for TAs and graduate scholarships. Both now include international students in a program's enrolment count used as a basis for allocating TAs and scholarship funding to programs. Hence, international students now attract both TA funding and scholarship funding to a program.

2.f: No comment.

Recommendation #3:

Faculty Hiring/Teaching/Workload

3.a) New hire in Archaeology in 2024-25

3.b) Explore the benefits and mechanisms of co-teaching / team-teaching as ways to meet the pedagogical goals around connections across and between the subfields.

3.c) Continue to press Deans and Central Services to address concerns with SAS, MSAF, Academic Advising, and Communications and identify aspects and burdens that are unique to social science classes and programs

3 d) Keep an eye on imbalances in graduate supervision loads and its impact on faculty and students; discuss as a department how to maintain good balance

3.e) Continue to devote time, energy and funds towards community building through events that engage all members of the department (faculty, staff, undergrads, and grads and postdocs)

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:

3.a We absolutely agree that we need a hire in archaeology. With a recent loss of a critical faculty member to a spousal hire, an upcoming retirement, and various leave cycles, it is very likely the department will have *only one* archaeologist trying to maintain a popular and critical element of our program. This lack of archaeologists in the department is already undermining our pedagogical goals (and is a considerable threat to larger initiatives, such as the current CFI application.)

ACTION: The Chair will continue to push for this significant need to keep the archaeology program afloat.

3. b Co-teaching is indeed possible, although requires a sharing of credits. Such off-setting is possible (i.e. a trade off from year to year), but remains most achievable as a pairing of scholars, rather than a larger team (e.g. Iqbal/Stainova, Poinar/Prowse, Moffatt/Wissler, Carter/Roddick)

ACTION: Undergraduate committee will discuss options based on student needs, and faculty availability, through reference to existing university models. Our department manager and undergraduate chair will explore options across the University. We also look forward to guidance from the FSS Dean to assess how other disciplines make this work in an equitable fashion.

3.c Student Accessibility Services (SAS), McMaster Student Absence Form (MSAF), and Academic Advising are key labour concerns. Some of our faculty members balance almost 50% of their students in large classes having SAS accommodations. Ongoing conversations across the FSS make it clear that concerns around SAS, MSAFs and academic advising are widely acknowledged, and various efforts are underway to shift the heavy burden, including the investigation of new TA roles to lessen the burden. We hope these broader discussions filter down to us via Dean's Advisory Committee (DAC) and Undergraduate Academic Planning and Policy Committee (UPPC), as solutions for these issues cannot come soon enough.

ACTION:

None, other than a continuation in engaging wider discussions.

3.d. In a smaller department such as ours, imbalances are inevitable, given the stochastic and unpredictable nature of graduate admissions (i.e., there is no way to predict the balance of students from each given subfield who will be admitted in any given year). It should be noted that the current provincial budget model also requires departments to keep to a narrow corridor, which sometimes results in pressure for faculty members (even those with high supervisory/committee duties) to accept students. Further, the department has seen a shift in the quality of applicants in recent years, and, thus, we cannot assume a steady flow of high-quality applicants; thus, faculty members tend to accept strong students even in years when their load is high. The department aims to continue to prioritize junior faculty members for supervision opportunities, as historically this has comprised a key-component of tenure expectations. That said, with the noted increasing issues concerning the diminishing quality of graduate applicants, we will carefully monitor the situation moving forward, aware that we may need to revise tenure expectations regarding graduate supervision (i.e., taking a lesser quality student may lead to greater work responsibilities, negatively impacting other core tenure deliverables such as publications and grants). Further, within department mechanisms, the Chair is cognizant of differential supervisory and supervisory committee loads and can aim to distribute service duties within that context.

3. e. The department of Anthropology (like other departments across the faculty) continues to “bounce” back from COVID. We will continue to plan several events per term to continue to build a sense of community. In Spring 2023 and Fall 2024, we have already observed a significant uptick in a sense of community in the department. For instance, we have a very enthusiastic new student group of our undergraduate society (McMaster Anthropology Society), who are being closely supervised by the undergraduate chair, the Undergraduate Administrative Assistant, and the archaeology Instructional Assistant. Several events have been planned, which will build off a successful anniversary event in September. Some faculty members have started a small reading group stemming from their shared interests, and graduate students have recently initiated a brown bag lunch series and a writing group. **ACTION:** Continue what we are doing, with annual reflections, while also acknowledging that community creation is an organic affair, and that faculty, staff, and students alike may not always appreciate expectations to participate in social/academic events above and beyond expected workloads.

Dean’s Response:

3.a: The department has advocated very strongly regarding the need to hire an archaeologist as soon as feasible. The Faculty acknowledges this priority.

3.b: See previous response on the issue of team teaching. It is feasible and is done in many programs, but not in a model in which each instructor receives full credit as if serving as the sole instructor.

3.c: As the department notes, this is a problem across the Faculty (and the university). The Faculty has worked to provide support to instructors. A few years ago it hired a full-time staff person to provide support to instructors with particularly difficult accommodation cases. The Faculty established a working group last year to identify options for providing support to instructors in managing MSAF. The Faculty will be piloting the recommended program starting this winter term, creating a new, part-time staff position in departments to provide support managing MSAF requests for (primarily) large first- and second-year courses. Anthropology has expressed an interest in participating in the pilot program.

3.d: No comment.

3.e: The department has a strong, collegial culture. Like all departments, it has struggled with faculty presence in the department since the COVID pandemic. This reduced presence especially affects junior faculty and students. There is no simple, effective way to address this. Like others, it is experimenting with different ways to address this and departments in Social Sciences share information on strategies they are implementing and their effects. ON it part, the Faculty has supported these efforts by departments and programs.

Recommendation #4:

Teaching Labs

4. Renew and renovate Lab Space

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:

We agree with the Reviewers' assessments of the poor quality of our lab space (an issue that has been raised in previous IQAP reviews). Given the flooding issues, it would seem critical to find more appropriate spaces for the archaeology labs and their associated collections. In both the bioarchaeology and archaeology labs there are underlying issues with the space itself. There are significant constraints impacting the pedagogy of cutting-edge teaching, where it is impossible to teach students appropriately in cramped, stuffy locations.

ACTION: There have already been some changes since the Reviewers visit. In Spring 2024, our bioanthropology teaching lab (CNH 407) received an upgraded touch display (75"), a built-in room PC, and a laptop device connection for external devices (though it was also noted that these developments also served to make a small space even more cramped, space being one of the key issues here). We also acquired a new document camera which is portable and mostly used in the Anthropology labs; our archaeology teaching lab (KTH B122) received an 86" upgraded touch display, a built-in Room PC, a laptop/device connection for external devices, new CAT 6 network lines, and wireless presentation last year. Both rooms are slated to receive new tables (with power) and electrical upgrades to help with safety, cable management and powering user devices. This is funded for fiscal year 2025 under FSS Teaching & Learning budget. An application is also in to cover additional microscopes, land-based recording/mobile internet/streaming equipment which could be used at field schools off site, 4 additional portable document cameras, Accessible signage for archaeology lab area was also part of the application.

These actions, however, are not impacting the critical problems with the space itself. Our large CFI application, if successful, is hoped to have major positive impacts on these matters, albeit indirectly as CFI's cannot be linked to undergraduate instruction. In short, were the grant be successful, space on campus where research labs currently exist would be vacated and returned to the FSS; in turn we hope that other improved spaces for our teaching labs could be provided within this context of spatial reconfiguration.

Dean's Response:

4. I am aware of the need to address deficiencies regarding the department's lab-based teaching spaces. As noted, the Faculty recently invested to upgrade the technology in the lab. More fundamental is the physical space, including both the size of the lab and its dated infrastructure. The Faculty is supporting a large CFI application to upgrade comprehensively the research spaces, especially those that support archaeological and bio-anthropology research. While this will not directly address the deficiencies in the teaching lab, it will reconfigure department space in a way that will facilitate re-location and updating of the teaching lab. This represents one important strategy. The Faculty will also work with the

department to develop an approach that could be pursued should the CFI application not be successful. The strategy must include both funding (e.g., through the upcoming capital campaign) and space options. The Faculty commits to addressing these problems.

Recommendation #5:

5. Teaching Collections - deal with collections with proper consultation with First Nations where possible and appropriate. This is an urgent area of improvement

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:

The archaeological, ethnographic, and biological collections are in the process of being properly documented. Our new archaeology Instructional Assistant (with less than 6 months experience on the job) has already made significant progress in cataloging and organizing the collections. The reviewers also highlight concerns about human remains, which have no direct relationship to our undergraduate or graduate curriculum. Furthermore, the reviewers time in the laboratory was led by a new IA, who did not have the necessary background to explain the process associated with the Ancestors. We take the concerns expressed seriously.

Since at least 2004, successive Chairs of McMaster University's Department of Anthropology have attempted to initiate the repatriation/rematriation of Indigenous Ancestors, whose human remains had been held irreverently for decades. Starting in 2018, however, a new Chair of the Department of Anthropology reinvigorated this initiative, leading to a new Repatriation and Collections Committee (RACC) and an elaboration of the original 2004 Repatriation and Collections Committee policy statement. Since that time bioarchaeology colleagues along with a Six Nations (Haudenosaunee) colleague, working within Band Council have been documenting the Ancestors' remains. Approximately 60% of the Ancestors were documented before 2020, when our progress was stalled by the COVID-19 hiatus and the sad passing of our Band Council colleague in 2020.

Since that time, the revised policy statement has been reviewed (in 2022) by the McMaster Indigenous Education Council (IEC, which includes several Indigenous faculty members) and a funding application has been sent to the Provost and colleagues on the Joint Indigenous-Administrative Consultation Group (JIACG) Committee. Funding was granted by the Provost via a JIACG meeting in June 2023. In late summer 2023, a Haudenosaunee Traditional specialist was consulted about the Return of the Ancestors, which eventually resulted in their visit to Kenneth Taylor Hall B122 and a series of discussions about the next steps. In August 2024, most Ancestors were removed from Kenneth Taylor Hall and brought to Sustainable Archaeology McMaster. Those few remaining will also receive final documentation and come to Sustainable Archaeology McMaster, likely in October 2024. It is in this facility where the Ancestors are being bundled in natural muslin in preparation for their reburial. Reburial of the Ancestors will take place when the Haudenosaunee Traditional specialist feels the time is right, likely in spring 2025.

ACTION: Some of the requests for laboratory infrastructure has been packaged into a grant request that was submitted in summer of 2024. As noted above, most of the Ancestors have already been

located to a more appropriate location, and reburial is anticipated in the next year.

Dean's Response:

The department has been working assiduously on this matter for the last number of years. It has made considerable progress in the last couple of years, with support from the Faculty and university. At the moment, the expectation is that it will largely be resolved in the near future.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation	Action(s) to be Taken	Responsibility for Leading Action (specify the role(s) that will be responsible for each action item e.g. Program Chair.)	Timeline for Completing Action (indicate specific timelines (e.g. not 'ongoing') for action)
UNDERGRADUATE 1. A) Consider a required Honours Thesis or 4th year Capstone project.	The undergraduate committee will explore the option of back-to-back independent studies and ways that faculty member may be able to gain credit for such work.	The undergraduate chair in consultation with the chair and the dean.	Complete by Fall 2025, and if feasible, presented to the 2025 Undergraduate Curriculum committee.
1. B) Discuss moving forward with the idea of a 3 fields Food Studies minor	We will submit a proposal for the Fall 2024 Undergraduate Committee	The undergrad chair, undergraduate administrative assistant and department manager	To be fully approved by university curriculum committees by Spring 2025 and be available to interested student in Fall 2025.
1. C) Explore ways to expand field schools to include all three sub-disciplines; look at alternate course delivery structures to increase accessibility.	We will revisit the possibility of a bioarchaeology field school and explore experiential education possibilities in sociocultural side (including co-op options)	Department Chair	Complete by Spring 2026
GRADUATE 2. A) Consider adding a required Theory and Method course.	The department will not add a Theory and Method course.	N/A	N/A
2. B) Consider designing a unique three-stream course	-We will not at this time design a three-stream course	N/A	N/A

<p>(possibly team taught) and seek a model for crediting team teaching.</p>	<p>-We will ensure that our annual graduate curriculum/course offerings ensure a diverse and inclusive (to students across the subfields) suite of courses.</p> <p>The department will continue to ensure that all three subfields are well represented in the department seminar series/annual speakers invited to the department.</p>	<p>Graduate Chair will evaluate course offerings with an eye toward three fields accessibility and inclusivity annually during curricular planning.</p> <p>Speaker Series Committee</p>	<p>Implemented in Fall 2024 to begin in Fall 2025/Winter 2026.</p> <p>Implemented to begin in Fall 2024 with speaker invitations for Winter 2025</p>
<p>2. C) Ensure consistent approach in Comprehensive Exam process regarding list preparation, meeting time with committee beforehand, timely marking, and meaningful feedback. Ensure no student is made to write Comp 2 without adequate debrief and feedback on Comp 1</p>	<p>-All new faculty members will be briefed by the Graduate Chair in a one-on-one meeting about the processes, expectations, and nature of feedback expected on comprehensive exams.</p> <p>-Graduate Chair and Graduate Admin will keep close eye on the timely return of feedback on comprehensive exams. If the deadline is exceeded, the Graduate Chair will meet with the relevant faculty member to remind them of the expectations and obligations around comprehensive exams.</p> <p>-Should a faculty member miss deadlines or fail to provide substantive feedback more than</p>	<p>Graduate Chair will do this briefing to ensure all faculty members are up to speed on comprehensive exam expectations.</p> <p>Graduate Chair and Graduate Admin will track closely the return of evaluations from supervisors and committee members. If the feedback is not returned by the deadline, the Graduate Chair will immediately reach out to the faculty member in question.</p> <p>Graduate Chair and Department Chair will confer should this arise.</p>	<p>Implemented Fall 2024. We have one new faculty member who has not yet experienced the comprehensive exams process. Graduate Chair will debrief them in Fall 2024. Going forward, the Graduate Chair will debrief any future new faculty members in the Fall of their first year joining the Department.</p> <p>N/A</p>

	twice, the Department Chair and Graduate Chair will confer as to next steps, which may include removal from graduate committees.		
2. D) Look for ways for graduate students to have access to independent reading courses with their supervisors and seek a model for crediting faculty teaching	<p>-We do not wish to increase the number of independent study courses as we see them as ‘stop-gap’ measures rather than expected inclusions, in a student’s coursework.</p> <p>-Given our departmental discussion, faculty members will ensure consistent messaging around independent study courses and around the value of taking a breadth of courses in the department.</p> <p>-Individual students’ supervisors may elect to run an independent study. In some cases, as when a student is the only admittee from a subfield in any given year, the student’s supervisor will discuss with the Graduate Chair viable options to ensure sufficient training and exposure in the student’s areas of interest and study (e.g., taking an undergraduate course as an independent study, even beyond the typically permitted 1 independent study course).</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>Departmental faculty members and Graduate Administrative Assistant to ensure messaging to new students</p> <p>Individual supervisor(s) and Graduate Chair will confer</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>Beginning Fall 2024</p> <p>Late summer of each academic year</p>

2. E) Continue to press for funding for international students in all subfields.	<p>-We will continue to press for more funding for international students</p> <p>-We will explore how other departments in FSS and beyond may fund international students</p>	<p>Graduate Chair will raise at Graduate Curriculum and Policy Committee (GCPC) and Graduate Council. Department Chair will raise at relevant venues. Graduate Chair will confer with other Graduate Chairs and Graduate Dean.</p>	<p>Beginning Fall 2024</p> <p>Fall 2024 and Winter 2025</p>
2. F) Continue the practice of early review of graduate program applications and early offers	<p>-Practice will be continued, but with continued care. Early offers are contingent on graduate funding available. We estimate our budget every year based on WGUs and only receive our formal budget confirmation AFTER offers have gone out.</p>	<p>-Graduate Admin and Graduate Chair</p>	<p>Currently done and continuing.</p>
3. A) New hire in Archaeology in 2024-25	<p>We will continue to press the FSS Dean on this critical need.</p>	<p>Department Chair</p>	<p>Quarterly follow-ups with Dean until implemented</p>
3. B) Explore the benefits and mechanisms of co-teaching / team-teaching as ways to meet the pedagogical goals around connections across and between the subfields.	<p>-The department will explore how other departments (if they do so) implement team-taught courses at both the graduate and undergraduate level (see recommendation 2b), though we will not at this time be implementing a team-taught course. Should such teaching opportunities be properly and fully credited, we will reconsider this.</p>	<p>Chair, Graduate Chair and Department Manager</p>	

3. C) Continue to press Deans and Central Services to address concerns with Student Accessibility Services (SAS), McMaster Absence Reporting Form (MSAF), Academic Advising, and Communications. Identify aspects and burdens that are unique to social science classes and programs.	We will continue to work with the administration in the Faculty of Social Science on this need.	Department Chair, Undergraduate Chair, Department Manager.	Ongoing and while the implementation will be Faculty-wide, we are optimistic that some changes will be implemented by Fall 2025.
3. D) Keep an eye on imbalances in graduate supervision loads; discuss as a department how to maintain good balance	<p>-Imbalances are observed, but deemed inevitable, given the nature of graduate admissions, faculty research leaves, administrative appointments, and the pressures of the corridor model</p> <p>-Department Chair will consider supervisory and committee workloads in determining distribution of other departmental service.</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>Department Chair</p>	<p>N/A</p> <p>Fall 2025 initiation</p>
3. E) Continue to devote time, energy and funds towards community building through events that engage all members of the department.	Several years ago, the department created a social committee as one of the department standing committees, provides \$2500 each year towards social events for all department members. Polls are done each year to solicit interest in potential social events.	Department chair in consultation with social committee.	Currently done and continuing.
4. Renew and renovate Lab Space	Some actions already taken (grants for small furniture and technology needs). If CFI is	Department Chair and Dean.	Unknown.

	successful, work with the dean to find more suitable laboratory spaces.		
5. Deal with collections with proper consultation with First Nations where possible and appropriate	Some of the requests for laboratory infrastructure has been packaged into a grant request that was submitted in summer of 2024. Most of the Ancestors have already been located to a more appropriate location, and reburial is anticipated in the next year.	Department Chair, Instructional Assistants, and repatriation/rematriation committee	Fall 2025/Winter 2026

Quality Assurance Committee Recommendation

McMaster's Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) reviewed the above documentation at the January 23, 2025, meeting. The committee recommends that the **Anthropology** undergraduate and graduate programs should follow the regular course of action with an 18-month progress report and subsequent full external cyclical review to be conducted no later than eight years after the start of the last review.