

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Institutional Quality Assurance Program (IQAP) Review

Integrated Business and Humanities

(Undergraduate Program)

Date of Review: April 15 and 16, 2025

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 Integrated Business and Humanities program. 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 Integrated Business and Humanities program submitted a self-study in February 2025 to the Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning 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, DeGroote School of Business, and selected by the Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning. The review team reviewed the self-study documentation and then conducted a virtual site visit on April 15 and 16, 2025. The review included interviews with the Deputy Provost, Acting Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning, Dean of DeGroote School of Business, Dean Faculty of Humanities, Associate Deans of Undergraduate Studies (Business and Humanities), Program Director, and meetings with groups of current students, full-time faculty and support staff.

The Associate Deans of Undergraduate Studies (Business and Humanities), Program Director and Program Administrator, Educational Developer, Leadership Development Program Coordinator and, Dean of DeGroote School of Business and Dean Faculty of Humanities submitted responses to the Reviewers' Report (May 2025). Specific recommendations were discussed, and clarifications and corrections were presented. Follow-up actions and timelines were included.

Strengths

The report highlighted the program's strengths well and identified some exciting opportunities for improvement. The strengths (#1-6) are noted below, and the recommendations for improvement are detailed in the tables that follow.

1. Innovative interdisciplinary model

- a. IBH fully embeds liberal arts learning into core curriculum

2. Cohort-Based Structure with Strong Community Culture

- a. Tight-knit cohort model promotes learning, collaboration and long-term networking

3. Experiential Learning Opportunities

- a. 80% of students completing internship
- b. Many going on international exchanges
- c. Curricular experiential learning embedded throughout

4. Commitment to Socially Responsible Leadership

- a. Emphasis around pillars provides strong focus supporting responsible business education

5. Strong Faculty Collaboration Across Disciplines

- a. Rich interdisciplinary foundation brings diverse academic perspectives

6. High Student Satisfaction and Retention

- a. Strong student satisfaction and retention suggesting a well-aligned academic and development environment

Opportunities for Improvement and Enhancement, including appropriateness of resources:

Below, we summarize the reviewer recommendations within each theme along with our response and planned course of action.

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

Recommendation #1: Leadership and Governance

The report suggests to strengthen the formal governance structure of the IBH and to add an associate director to strengthen input from the humanities faculty.

Program's Response and Actions to be Taken:

The program appreciates the need to strengthen the mechanisms through which the voice of the Humanities is able to influence the program and its development.

Actions:

- In the short term, the Associate Dean Humanities intends to take a more active role on the IBH Operating Committee to provide that stronger input from Humanities in that forum. In the past, the Associate Deans, ex-officio members of the committee, would not typically attend.
- To increase the voice of Humanities leadership in the IBH program the following changes in meeting structure/composition will be made:
 - The IBH program director will meet with both the Dean of Humanities and the Dean of Business concurrently in the Fall and in the Winter terms to discuss strategic issues related to the IBH program.
 - The Associate Dean of Humanities will be invited to join monthly meetings between the program director and the Associate Dean of Business to discuss tactical issues related to the IBH program
- In the medium to long term, we will consider the possibility of appointing an associate director from Humanities. Key to this will be identifying a clear scope of responsibility for such a role.
- The program will create a governance calendar that better formalizes meeting schedules and responsibilities of the different formal and informal governance bodies, including the IBH Operating Committee and the IBH Executive Committee.

Dean's Response:

Humanities response: I support these responses. It will also be important that we replace outgoing faculty members with new FT/tenure-stream faculty members so that the Humanities contributions to instruction remain strong.

Business response: I am in support of these responses and feel they adequately address the recommendation.

Recommendation #2: Integration and Co-Teaching

Enhance the integration by designing co-taught courses blending business and humanities.

Program's Response and Actions to be Taken:

Currently the IBH program does not teach courses that are explicitly designed as a combination of business and humanities knowledge/practice. Instead, IBH students take courses in Humanities and Business separately as part of a carefully design curriculum and within a cohort. Co-teaching carries with it substantial challenges and the IBH program does not currently have the resources to overcome those challenges.

However, there are a number of practices in which the IBH program engages that addresses integration of program content.

For example, IBH students integrate business and humanities knowledge through the reflective practices found in the LD0 courses and IBH co-curricular activities. Furthermore, the program has encouraged interactions between upper year and first year courses; often crossing business and humanities programming. For instance, the 1st and 4th year community engaged courses work together often exposing the 1st year students to the upper year's experiential projects. In another project, 4th year students helped 1st year students enhance how they communicated visually. Finally, 3rd year students in 3AA3 have often taken mentorship roles with 1st and 2nd year IBH students as part of an internal IBH community engagement project. While not team taught courses, these examples provide opportunities for integration across business and humanities.

Actions:

- The director will continue to encourage collaboration across courses, in particular between upper and lower year courses and across business and humanities faculties.
- For courses with such collaboration, a mid-term check-in process will be initiated.

Dean's Response:

Humanities' response: I agree that co-teaching is too resource intensive, but we will seek other ways to bolster communication between faculty members in the two Faculties.

Business response: I agree with the program response that there are already several mechanisms to encourage students to integrate knowledge across Business and Humanities. I think that encouraging further collaboration and interaction between Business and Humanities instructors will enhance this further.

Recommendation #3: Leadership Development (LD0)

Enhance and formalize the LD0 program by providing a clear framework to ensure consistency across cohorts.

Program's Response and Actions to be Taken:

The LD0 course series is a relatively new addition to the IBH program and 2024/2025 was the first time in which the 3rd year course – 3LD0 was run. This likely contributed to a sense of inconsistency across cohorts – particularly those in final year who were caught up in the change of delivery.

Actions:

- Workshops and deliverables for the LD0 course series are being streamlined to manage workload expectations within a year-long 0-unit course.

Dean's Response:

Humanities' response: I support the plans put forth by Dr. McKnight.

Business response: I support the plan provided by the program.

Recommendation #4: Program Mapping

Conduct a comprehensive curriculum mapping exercise, especially for all IBH core courses to ensure program-level learning outcomes are being met. This will also identify redundancy, gaps, and opportunities.

Program's Response and Actions to be Taken:

The program recognizes the importance of building a curriculum map.

Actions:

- The program administration will prepare a model articulating program learning objectives over the duration of the program as related to the four pillars of the IBH program – social entrepreneurship, community engagement, leadership, and global mindedness. This maturity model will identify key knowledge and skills that students gain related to these pillars as they progress through the program.
- These program level objectives will be mapped to particular courses over the course of the program.
- Visuals suitable for students and applicants will be generated to explain this learning journey.

Dean's Response:

Humanities' response: the Program Director has been taking steps recently to identify more clearly the educational pillars of the program, and I support his plans for further mapping of these pillars into the PLOs and course-specific learning outcomes.

Business response: The plan to address this recommendation as articulated by the Program Director is sound and I fully support it.

Recommendation #4b: Curriculum Gaps

The report identified gaps in terms of a) indigenous knowledge and b) data analytics, excel and financial modeling.

Program's Response and Actions to be Taken:

The program recognizes the potential for enhancing practical skills related to data analytics, Excel and financial modeling as well as the possibility of improving the inclusion of indigenous knowledge in the program.

Actions:

- Identify opportunities to include Indigenous perspectives and knowledge in core IBH courses.
- Encourage faculty to take the Indigenous Coursera course to build capacity within faculty to identify opportunities to incorporate indigenous business concepts.
- Encourage positive examples of indigenous-led businesses through cases and examples
- Construct opportunities for students to learn Excel, data analytics and data visualization
- Conduct an audit comparing IBH and BCOM Excel and data analytics learning opportunities in the curriculum.

Dean's Response:

Humanities' response: In addition to the ideas above, perhaps some Indigenous business leaders could be invited to speak to IBH students at a co-curricular event or in class visits.

Business response: I support the program proposed actions and the suggestions of the Dean of Humanities to address this recommendation. Further, IBH students will have a chance to benefit from a variety of learning opportunities through the AI & Data Analytics learning hub in our new McLean Centre for Collaborative discovery.

Recommendation #4c: Assessing Cumulative Achievement

The report identified gaps in terms of how cumulative achievement was assessed both in terms of program-level objectives and alumni. In addition to alumni and graduate surveys, other suggestions included reflective exit assessments and graduate portfolios.

Program's Response and Actions to be Taken:

In terms of reflective exit assessments and graduate portfolios, the capstone course on community engagement provides an opportunity for students to reflect on what the journey in IBH has meant to them and what integrated business and humanities means to them. In addition, their leadership learning journey helps graduating students reflect on their time in the program; this has been completed in 2024/2025 in 1st, 2nd, and 3rd year LD0 courses.

In terms of alumni engagement, the program engages in informal tracking of alumni by updating a spreadsheet of employment based on alumni's LinkedIn profiles. All IBH students and alumni are members of a closed-membership IBH group.

Actions:

- The program will solidify assurance of learning practices based on their revised curriculum mapping.
- The IBH program will encourage the alumni team to engage in formal post-graduate surveys.

Dean's Response:

Humanities' response: I support the Program's plans.

Business response: I support the Program's plans. We have recently enhanced our alumni function appointing an alumni manager which will also support the Program in better connecting with its alumni.

Recommendation #4d: Final Capstone Opportunity

The report identified that the current capstone programming misses an opportunity for students to integrate the four pillars of the program into a more cohesive whole.

Program's Response and Actions to be Taken:

Actions:

- The program will embark on an evaluation of the IBH capstone by hosting a summit to gather feedback on how to get the most out of these capstone courses as a finish to the IBH program.

Dean's Response:

Humanities supports the idea of a re-evaluation of the capstone project to ensure it is meeting the goals of the program.

Business response: Now that the program has had several cohorts graduate, the Program plans to solicit input from them as to how to enhance the capstone project is a great idea.

Recommendation #5: Curriculum and Cohort Structure

The report recommends reassessing the cohort model to strike a better balance between cohort building and flexibility. This includes permitting students to take courses alongside Business and Humanities students and, if possible, electives earlier in the program.

Program's Response and Actions to be Taken:

The program recognizes how IBH students work exclusively in their cohort in the first 3 years of the program and that this has positive impacts for cohort building but limits their interaction with other students.

In terms of adding more elective flexibility, this is difficult as students require existing courses to build foundational knowledge that they will use in their upper-year business and humanities courses.

Actions:

- IBH students will begin taking 1 or 2 previously cohorted courses alongside Business or Humanities students. Starting in Fall of 2025, students will take Organizational Behaviour alongside Business students in multiple sections. Upon review of this practice, 2 courses in 2nd year (likely Finance and Talent Management) and 1 course in 3rd year (likely Operations Management) will be opened up to be taken alongside Business students. In addition, the program is exploring offering Critical Thinking alongside students from Humanities' department of Philosophy.

Dean's Response:

Humanities supports the integration of IBH students into our standard Critical Thinking course offered by the Dept of Philosophy. IBH students have successfully been included in a History dept course (alongside non IBH students). Having them learn alongside non-IBH students in a few more courses should not undermine the cohort experience too much and can have other benefits.

Business response: I am fully in support of IBH students taking several courses along side their Business and Humanities counterparts as outlined by the Program.

Recommendation #6: Experiential Learning

The report identified an opportunity to increase the quantity and diversity of experiential learning opportunities including activities that span multiple courses and develop a centralized experiential learning strategy.

In addition, the report suggests restarting the international trips that were originally conceptualized for this program.

Program's Response and Actions to be Taken:

The IBH program offers experiential learning opportunities of different types across all years of the program including simulations, international experiences, live cases, capstone projects, and local field experiences.

The Experiential Learning team at DeGroote is currently conducting an audit of experiential learning opportunities at the school including within the IBH program. Information from this audit will be used to better understand the extent and quality of experiential learning within the program and to make suggested improvements.

The LD0 program is increasingly a place in the program where students can reflect on their experiences as they consider their leadership journey. Starting in 2024/2025 students have been contributing to a digital portfolio that will become a repository of their growth during their time in the program

While a trip may be desirable, the financial pressures and resources required to mount such a trip are prohibitive. While in the short-term a trip is not possible, consideration will be given to mounting a local trip in Canada as resources permit.

Actions:

- The program will identify and fill gaps in experiential learning opportunities as part of the curriculum mapping exercise from recommendation 4.

Dean's Response:

Humanities agrees with the Program Director's response.

Business agrees with the Program response.

Recommendation #7: Direct Entry to Co-op

The report identified a possibility of offering direct entry to the co-op (and internship) opportunities offered

Program's Response and Actions to be Taken:

The co-op and internship programming at DeGroote is offered on an equal basis to Bachelor of Commerce and IBH students. Given that co-op and internship opportunities are sought by students on a competitive basis, the DeGroote School of Business aims to provide a level playing field for all undergraduate students as it relates to the career opportunities.

The Commerce program is considering direct entry opportunities and the IBH program would likely follow the lead of the Commerce program in offering direct entry opportunities to co-op and internship if that was adopted.

It should be noted that IBH students do very well in this competitive process and secure placements at a high rate in our current internship program.

Actions:

- We will monitor how the Commerce program proceeds as it relates to direct entry to co-op and internship opportunities and model our response based on their direction.

Dean's Response:

Humanities supports the program's plan.

Business also supports the Program plan.

Recommendation #8: Entry Criteria and International Students

The report identified a need to ensure the program is accessible to international students.

Program's Response and Actions to be Taken:

The IBH program have only recruited a handful of international students to the program. Given that global mindedness is a key pillar of the program, recruiting international students would not only benefit the program financially but also would improve the learning within the program by exposing students in the program to a greater diversity of backgrounds.

Actions:

- The program will introduce an IBH MELD offering into the OUAC portal for the 2026/2027 application year. The MELD program allows the DeGroote School of Business to offer conditional acceptances to students who are a good fit for the program but whose English language skills need improvement. In conjunction with this, we will offer opportunities to students with MELD offers for BCom an opportunity to submit an application to the IBH program if they so choose.
- The program will explore offering enhanced scholarships for international students applying to the IBH program.
- We will enhance communication to the central recruiting team that engages in international recruitment resources to target specific and promising international high schools.
- The program will create resources to help guide international applicants in how best to approach the supplementary application/interview. This might include guides and online sessions

Dean's Response:

Humanities' response: I support the plans put forth by Dr. McKnight.

Business response: I am in full agreement with the importance of this recommendation and am in support of the proposed actions by the Program to address it.

Recommendation #9: Faculty Continuity

The report identifies the need to ensure continuity and consistency of teaching by reducing overreliance on sessional instructors suggesting a long-term faculty engagement strategy with appointments and recognition.

Program's Response and Actions to be Taken:

The IBH program is at an inflection point of sorts, with some of the core IBH instructors from the founding of the program moving on to other responsibilities and/or retiring from the university. This has created a structural gap in the program in terms of core teaching; this needs to be shored up.

In recent years the DeGroote School of Business has hired approximately 25 new faculty members to increase the capacity to engage long-term faculty in teaching in programs such as IBH.

When deciding which courses IBH students will take with Commerce and Humanities students, consideration will be given to where there are gaps in full-time faculty. Courses currently taught by sessional instructors will be prioritized for IBH students to take with Commerce and Humanities students.

Actions:

- Focus will be on core IBH courses starting with capstone courses, to identify permanent faculty from Business and Humanities to teach these courses. If no fulltime faculty are available, long-term relationships with highly qualified sessional instructors will be formed.

Dean's Response:

Humanities – agrees with the need for long-term, preferably FT faculty members to teach in core courses. I aim to replace our outgoing IBH instructors with other FT Hum instructors.

Business response: As identified by the Program, the fact that we have hired a substantial number of FT faculty in the past two years should help address this issue. We will continue to strive to increase the proportion of courses taught by FT faculty in years to come.

Recommendation #10: Recruitment and Gender Balance

The report makes note of the higher proportion of women students in IBH cohorts and suggests attempts to remedy the imbalance.

Program's Response and Actions to be Taken:

The IBH program is concerned about the gender imbalance in the program. In studying the situation, this imbalance reflects both the nature of the program as well as characteristics of the recruitment mechanisms.

The program involves a heavy emphasis on collaboration and empathy along with social entrepreneurship and community engagement that may resonate more with female applicants. We emphasize a range of traditional business as well as non-traditional roles, such as non-profit, sustainability and community-oriented roles, that may encourage male students to self-select out of the program. Further, the admissions process that involves Kira Talent-style interviews emphasizes verbal fluency, reflection, and affective expression that may further advantage female applicants.

Currently student ambassadors that represent the program in different recruitment activities are predominantly women, which could advantage other women applicants.

An additional comment made in the review was to discontinue use of student reviewers for recruitment. Currently the alumni base remains strong and 3rd year students in particular drive the volunteer base of this review committee. With 1300-1400 reviews a year, this is a large load to make up.

Actions:

- Target that at least 25% of student ambassadors attending Fall Preview and May @ Mac are male.

- Ensure that our videos promoting the IBH program include visual gender balance in its promotional materials.
- Emphasize careers that may have more appeal to male applicants including consulting, finance, law, and entrepreneurship. This will be included in recruitment materials and other direct outreach efforts.
- Request that our DeGroote EDI team review the online questions that are asked to applicants to identify and address potential bias

Dean's Response:

Humanities' response: I agree with the measures listed above.

Business response: I am in support of the Program plan.

Implementation Plan

In the chart below, please outline the recommendations made by reviewers, briefly outline the actions you plan to take, who will be responsible for leading the action, and a timeline for completion.

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)
Recommendation #1: Leadership and Governance. The report suggests to strengthen the formal governance structure of the IBH and adding an associate director to strengthen input from the humanities faculty.	- The Associate Dean of Humanities will attend IBH Operating Committee to strengthen stronger input from Humanities. - The Dean and Associate Dean of Humanities will attend some of the meetings between the program director and the Dean and Associate Dean of Business - We will explore appointing an associate director including identifying a clear scope of responsibility for such a role. - The program will create a governance calendar that better formalizes meeting schedules for governance bodies.	Program Administrator Program Director Program Director Program Director	Summer 2025 Fall 2025 Summer 2026 Summer 2025
Recommendation #2: Integration and Co-Teaching. Enhance the integration by designing co-taught courses blending business and humanities.	- Encourage collaboration across courses, in particular between upper and lower year courses and across business and humanities faculties. - For courses with such collaboration, a mid-term check-in process will be initiated.	Program Director DeGroote TLS	Fall 2025 Fall 2025/Winter 2026
Recommendation #3: Leadership Development (LD0). Enhance	The LD0 course series is being refined to focus on engaging and exciting in-	Program Director and Leadership	Fall 2025

and formalize the LDO program by providing a clear framework to ensure consistency across cohorts.	class workshops that are clearly related to the objectives of the LDO course series	Development Coordinator	
Recommendation #4: Program Mapping. Conduct a comprehensive curriculum mapping exercise, especially for all IBH core courses to ensure program-level learning outcomes are being met. This will also identify redundancy, gaps, and opportunities.	• Prepare a curriculum map articulating program learning objectives related to the four pillars of the program and tying them to particular courses • Identify opportunities to include Indigenous knowledge and perspectives in core IBH courses. • Encouraging faculty to take the Indigenous Coursera course to sensitize faculty to opportunities to incorporate Indigenous business concepts • Encourage positive examples of indigenous-led businesses through cases and examples • Construct opportunities for students to learn Excel, data analytics and data visualization • Conducting an audit comparing IBH and BCOM Excel and data analytics learning opportunities in the curriculum • The program will solidify assurance of learning practices based on their revised curriculum mapping • The IBH program will encourage the alumni team to engage in formal post-graduate surveys • The program will embark on an evaluation of the capstone elements of the IBH program by way of a capstone summit to explore how to get the most out of these capstone courses as a finish to the IBH program	Program Director	Summer 2025
		Program Director	Fall/Winter 2025/2026
		Program Director	Fall/Winter 2025/2026 – through Fall 2026
		Program Director	Fall/Winter 2025/2026
		Program Director	Fall/Winter 2025/2026
		Program Director	Summer 2026
		Program Director	Winter 2026
		Program Director	Summer 2025
		Program Director	Fall 2025

Recommendation #5: Curriculum and Cohort Structure. The report recommends reassessing the cohort model to strike a better balance between cohort building and flexibility. This includes permitting students to take courses alongside Business and Humanities students and if possible electives earlier in the program.	IBH students will begin taking, on an annual basis, 1 or 2 previously cohorted courses alongside Business or Humanities students.	Program Director	Fall 2025 and Fall 2026
Recommendation #6: Experiential Learning. The report identified an opportunity to increase the quantity and diversity of experiential learning opportunities including activities that span multiple courses and develop a centralized experiential learning strategy. In addition the report suggests restarting the international trips that were originally conceptualized for this program.	The program will identify and fill gaps in experiential learning opportunities as part of the curriculum mapping exercise from recommendation 4.	Program Director	Fall 2025
Recommendation #7: Direct Entry to Co-op. The report identified a possibility of offering direct entry to the co-op (and internship) opportunities offered	We will monitor how the Commerce program proceeds as it relates to direct entry to co-op and internship opportunities and model our response based on their direction.	Program Director	NA
Recommendation #8: Entry Criteria and International Students. The report identified a need to ensure the program is	The program will introduce an IBH MELD offering into the OUAC portal for the 2026/2027 application year.	Program Director Program Director	Fall 2025 Summer 2025

	• Request that our DeGroote EDI team review the online questions that are asked to applicants to identify and address potential bias		
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Quality Assurance Committee Recommendation

McMaster's Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) reviewed the above documentation at the February 19, 2026, meeting. The committee recommends that the **Integrated Business and Humanities (UG)** program should follow the regular course of action with an 18-month progress report and subsequent full external cyclical review to be scheduled in seven years, and to be conducted no later than eight years after the start of the last review.