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UNDERGRADUATE COUNCIL

Tuesday, April 21, 2026 at 2:30 p.m. via Zoom

AGENDA

Page

1. Call to Order

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting - March 24, 2026
Approval

2 - 6 Minutes - Undergraduate Council - March 24, 2026

3. Chair's Remarks

4. Business Arising

5. 2021 – 2025 IQAP Cyclical Program Reviews
A. Gullage & M. Raha
Approval

7 - 82 2021 – 2025 IQAP Cyclical Program Reviews

6. Courses Offered on Dean's permission as of April 13, 2026
C. Brooks
Information

83 - 88 Courses Offered on Dean's permission as of April 13, 2026

7. Recognition of Retiring UGC Members
M. Hussein
Information

8. Other Business

9. Adjournment

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Meeting Minutes of the Undergraduate Council
Tuesday, March 24, 2026 at 2:30 p.m.
Gilmour Hall, Council Room (Room 111)

Attendance:	Kim Dej (*Chair)*, Zubair Azizi, Sean Corner, Rosa da Silva, Gonzalo Dejo Mau, Sarah Dickson-Anderson, Ayesha Khan, Vivian Lewis, Karen McGarry, Caitlin Mullarkey, Beth Marquis, Eliza Ritchie, Aaron Schat, Mohammad Salhia, Laurel Yates, Michelle Zheng (*Associate University Secretary*)
Consultants:	Jordan Charron, Lynn Giordano, Amy Gullage, Jennifer Hamilton, Cathy Mackenzie, Liz Maguire, Greg Rombough, Cait Brooks, Carla Hodal
Invited:	Aimee Nelson, *Professor in the Department of Kinesiology*
Regrets:	Karen Balcom, Blake Clayton, Darran Fernandez, Mohammed Hussein, Yasmeen Mirza, Bridget O'Shaughnessy

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1. Call to Order

Kim Dej, *Chair of the Undergraduate Council*, called the meeting to order

2. Minutes of the Previous Meeting - February 24, 2026

It was duly moved and seconded,

that the Undergraduate Council approve the minutes of the meeting held on February 24, 2026, as circulated.

The motion was ***Carried***.

3. Business Arising

There was no business arising.

4. Chair's Remarks

K. Dej offered brief remarks.

5. Report from the Awards Committee

Rosa da Silva, *Chair of the Awards Committee,* presented the report.

1. Revisions to the Undergraduate Calendar for 2026-2027

At its meeting on March 3, 2026, the Undergraduate Council Awards Committee reviewed and approved minor revisions to the Undergraduate Calendar for 2026-2027.

Jordan Charron, *Senior Associate Registrar, Student Services and Financial Support,* provided an overview of the revisions.

It was duly moved and seconded,

that the Undergraduate Council approve the proposed revisions to the Undergraduate Calendar for 2026-2027, as circulated.

The motion was ***Carried***.

2. Terms of Awards

At the same meeting, the Undergraduate Council Awards Committee reviewed and approved terms of awards for recommendation to the Undergraduate Council.

a. Proposed New Awards
b. Proposed New Bursaries
c. Changes to Award Terms
d. Changes to Bursary Terms
e. Changes to Department Name
f. Academic Grants to be Removed from the Undergraduate Calendar

It was duly moved and seconded,

that the Undergraduate Council approve the recommendations contained in the Report from the Office of the Registrar Student Services and Financial Support, as circulated.

The motion was ***Carried***.

6. Report from the Committee on Certificates, Diplomas and Microcredentials

Aaron Schat, *Chair of the Joint Committee on Certificates, Diplomas and Microcredentials,* presented the report.

1. Certificate of Completion in Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS)

At its meeting on March 3, 2026, the Joint Committee on Certificates, Diplomas and Microcredentials reviewed and approved a new Certificate of Completion in Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS), as recommended by the Faculty of Science.

R. da Silva and Aimee Nelson, *Professor in the Department of Kinesiology,* provided an overview of the certificate.

It was duly moved and seconded,

that the Undergraduate Council approve, for recommendation to the University Planning Committee and the Senate, the Certificate of Completion in Transcranial Magnetic Stimulation (TMS), as recommended by the Faculty of Science and as circulated.

The motion was ***Carried***.

2. Revisions to Concurrent Certificate Program

At the same meeting, the Joint Committee on Certificates, Diplomas and Microcredentials reviewed and approved revisions to the Concurrent Certificate in Human Anatomy (CCHA), as recommended by the Faculty of Health Sciences.

It was duly moved and seconded,

that the Undergraduate Council approve the revisions to the Concurrent Certificate in Human Anatomy (CCHA) recommended by the Faculty of Health Sciences for inclusion in the 2026–2027 Undergraduate Calendar, as circulated.

The motion was ***Carried***.

7. Report from the Curriculum & Admissions Committee

Beth Marquis, *Chair of the Curriculum & Admissions Committee*, presented the Committee's report.

1. Addenda to Curriculum Revisions for Inclusion in the 2026-2027 Undergraduate Calendar

At its meeting on March 3, 2026, the Curriculum and Admissions Committee approved, for recommendation to Undergraduate Council, addenda to curriculum revisions contained in the following reports for inclusion in the 2026-2027 Undergraduate Calendar. All minor curriculum addenda will be encompassed by the omnibus motion.

a. Office of the Registrar

Carla Hodal, *Senior Associate Registrar, Admissions,* provided an overview of the revisions.

It was duly moved and seconded,

that the Undergraduate Council approve, for recommendation to the Senate, the revisions to Admission Requirements and related calendar housekeeping items, as proposed by the Office of the Registrar for inclusion in the 2026–2027 Undergraduate Calendar, as circulated.

The motion was ***Carried***.

b. Faculty of Engineering

Sarah Dickson-Anderson, *Associate Dean (Undergraduate), Engineering,* provided an overview of the revisions.

c. Faculty of Humanities

Sean Corner, *Associate Dean (Undergraduate), Humanities* provided an overview of the revisions.

d. Faculty of Science

R. da Silva provided an overview of the revisions.

It was duly moved and seconded,

that the Undergraduate Council approve the curriculum addenda proposed by the Faculties of Engineering, Humanities and Science for inclusion in the 2026-2027 Undergraduate Calendar, as circulated.

Members discussed language in the Calendar about online or in person lecture components and agreed that wording should be consistent across Faculties. It was agreed that this would be brought forward in the next cycle for discussion.

The motion was ***Carried***.

8. Other Business

K. Dej thanked everyone for their work this year and advised that Mohamed Hussein, *Vice-Chair, Undergraduate Council,* has kindly agreed to chair the April meeting in her absence.

9. Adjournment

As there was no other business, the meeting adjourned at 3:06 pm.

April 3, 2026

TO: Undergraduate Council

FROM: Kim Dej
Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning
Co-Chair, Quality Assurance Committee

RE: 2021 – 2025 IQAP Cyclical Program Reviews

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP) program reviews is to assist academic units in clarifying their objectives and to assess curriculum and pedagogical policies, including desirable changes for future academic development. Although the primary objective for these reviews is the improvement of our academic programs, the processes that we adopt are also designed to meet our responsibility to the government on quality assurance. The process by which institutions meet this accountability to the government is outlined in the Quality Assurance Framework (QAF), developed by the Ontario Councils of Academic Vice-Presidents (OCAV). Institutions' compliance with the QAF is monitored by the Ontario Universities Council on Quality Assurance, also known as the Quality Council, which reports to OCAV and the Council of Ontario Universities.

The goal of McMaster's IQAP is to facilitate the development and continued improvement of our undergraduate and graduate academic programs, and to ensure that McMaster continues to lead internationally in its reputation for innovation in teaching and learning and for the quality of its programs. McMaster's IQAP is intended to complement existing mechanisms for critical assessment and enhancement, including departmental reviews and accreditation reviews. The uniqueness of each program emerges through the self-study.

All program review reports (including self-studies, review team recommendations, departmental responses, and dean's implementation plans) are submitted to McMaster's Quality Assurance Committee, a joint committee of Undergraduate and Graduate Councils. The Quality Assurance Committee assesses all submitted reports and prepares a Final Assessment Report (FAR) for each program review conducted during the previous academic session.

Each FAR:

- Identifies significant strengths of the program;
- Addresses the appropriateness of resources for the success of the program;
- Identifies opportunities for program improvement and enhancement;
- Identifies and prioritizes the recommendations;

Undergraduate Council and/or Graduate Council will review this report to determine if it will make additional recommendations.

2021 – 2025 IQAP CYCLICAL PROGRAM REVIEWS

The following program was reviewed during 2021 – 2022

Undergraduate Program
Arts and Science

The following programs were reviewed during 2024 – 2025

Undergraduate Program
Integrated Business and Humanities

Undergraduate and Graduate Programs
Economics
Labour Studies
Philosophy

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Institutional Quality Assurance Program (IQAP) Review

Arts & Science Program

(Undergraduate Program)

Date of Review: 27-28 September, 2022

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 Arts and Science undergraduate 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 Arts and Science program submitted a self-study in May 2022 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 Director of Arts and Science program 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 27-28 September, 2022. The review included interviews with the Deputy Provost, Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning, Director of Arts and Science program, and meetings with groups of Instructors, Administrators, alumni and current students, and individuals involved with community-engaged experiential learning opportunities.

The Director of Arts and Science program and the Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning submitted responses to the Reviewers' Report (December 2022). Specific recommendations were discussed, and clarifications and corrections were presented. Follow-up actions and timelines were included.

Strengths

The review team emphasized that “the program is strong” and suggested that “all of its key features ought to be maintained, including its relatively small enrolment size.” The report notes that the program learning outcomes are “clear, appropriate and aligned with the undergraduate Degree Level Expectations,” and that they “resonate deeply with the university’s mission.” We appreciate the reviewers’ suggestion that, “for a vivid reflection of the institution’s vision of ‘Impact, Ambition and Transformation through Excellence, Inclusion and Community,’ one need look no further than the Arts & Science program. The self-study, site visit and supporting materials attest to an exemplary undergraduate program, redounding to the credit of the institution as a whole.”

Among the other specific strengths noted, the following were highlighted:

- The “interdisciplinary, inquiry-focused approach to liberal education [the program] offers.” The review team indicated that “students benefit immensely from learning from both the arts and science,” and that “this foundation enables them to navigate later life, careers, and the challenges of an increasingly globalized, dynamic, yet uncertain world.”
- The reviewers also emphasized the importance of the program’s efforts “to inculcate sensitivity to public, ethical and social issues through inquiry-driven and self-directed learning in the Program’s early stages,” and noted that the required core courses enable students to “learn from a plurality of knowledge practices, which allows them to make sense of the world and to evaluate how critical decisions affecting societies are being framed.”
- It was appreciated that the program enables "students to carefully choose their electives, to engage in experiential and collaborative learning, and to embark on a research thesis in the upper levels,” thereby providing them “a holistic learning experience.”
- The reviewers recognized that “the Program has a strong and compassionate team of committed instructors, deploying pedagogies that aim to develop independent and critical thinking among students.”
- The review team pointed out that the program “curriculum is curated to achieve balance between diverse epistemologies and is aimed to deliver an innovative climate for inquiry, teaching, and learning,” and suggested that “Program’s strong ties with the MacPherson Institute reflect a commitment to innovation and critical self-reflection among those teaching in the Program.”
- The yearslong “committed, caring, and competent leadership of the Director and a team of Academic Coordinators” was underlined, as was the role of such leadership in supporting “the sustainability and outstanding achievements” of the program.
- Reviewers highlighted that “student feedback from different cohorts consistently attests to their acquisition of advanced skills in oral and written communication, critical and ethical thinking, and self-directed learning.” They likewise noted that “A good number of the Arts & Science alumni occupy important career niches and remain grateful to the foundational skills and values they received from the Program,” and highlighted the valuable, ongoing involvement of many alumni with the program after graduation.

Opportunities for Improvement and Enhancement, including appropriateness of resources:

The following key recommendations for enhancing the program and building on its strengths were offered in the executive summary:

Teaching and Learning

- "In the middle level years, sensitively steer students towards learning and growing within the broadness of the Program's interdisciplinarity, but at the same time, proactively help them nurture aspirations and goals towards future work-life trajectories in an open-ended and realistic way"
- "Support students to seek meaning through making a difference in society now and after graduation, by cultivating habits of critical self-reflection and engaged local and global citizenship"
- "Increase and integrate diversity of content and instructors to reflect the aspirations, knowledges, and scholarly contributions of equity-denied groups"

Governance and Management

- *"*Strengthen the visibility of the program both internally and externally so that it can leverage and optimize its role and contribution to the university and to society."
- "Ensure that the leadership team of the Program is sufficiently supported to address the growing demands of day-to-day operations and student needs for guidance"
- "Develop clearer, more transparent policies governing how equity, diversity and inclusion principles are meant to inform admissions procedures."
- "Establish opportunities for regular dialogue among students in different years, along with faculty, program administrators, and the director on each of the following themes: 1) Reflecting critically and creatively on course content and teaching methods; 2) Plotting and discovering your educational trajectory; 3) Pursuing personal meaning and how to make a difference now and after graduation."

<u>Summary of the Reviewers' Recommendations with the Department's and Dean's Responses</u>

Recommendation #1: *Enhance internal and external communications.* Review team comments in the report related to this recommendation: "We recommend that the program and university enhance its level of internal and external communications about the program."
Department's Response and Actions to be Taken: As noted in the self-study, enhancing our communications is an ongoing and as yet unresolved concern. To help us respond meaningfully to this important suggestion, we hope to create an 'outreach' focused staff position (described further below). The person in such a position could also

interface with University communications staff in order to support the University's communications about the program where appropriate.

Dean's Response: (VPTL)

- The Director and I have had ongoing conversations about communications, internal and external. We will continue to work towards a dedicated role or a shared role with other units within the VPTL portfolio.

Recommendation #2:
Facilitated application processes

"We recommend that the program continue with developing a facilitated supplementary application process for potential students from equity-denied groups, but as part of a broader review of existing admission requirements, processes, and practices."

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:
Conversations about recruitment and admissions processes (including potential development of a facilitated application process of relevance to the program) are underway, and will involve students, faculty, and staff. Alongside potential additions to the supplementary application process, other ideas being explored (suggested initially by Access Program Manager Celeste Licorish) include developing a stream of the highly successful McMaster Discovery Program that would engage students who are in/just post high school and identify as members of equity denied groups, and paid student 'equity-champion' positions to aid in recruitment efforts.

Dean's Response: (VPTL)

- I agree with the response of the Director. The program is engaging in a consultative process with units across campus to create an inclusive and equitable applications process.

Recommendation #3:
Policies governing equity, diversity and inclusion principles that inform supplementary application assessments

"We recommend clearer, more transparent policies governing how equity, diversity and inclusion principles are meant to inform the way supplementary application assessments are made. In conjunction, we recommend reviewing the design and content of the training/ information sessions, while adding follow-up opportunities for the application reviewers to identify any challenges and to develop best practices."

Work to consider such policies and principles, as well as a review of the training processes, will be factored into the efforts to continue reviewing and enhancing our recruitment and admissions procedures described above.

It is already the case that supplementary application reviewers are invited to offer feedback on the process each year. We will ensure that this process is maintained.

Dean's Response: (VPTL)

- I agree with the Director's response. Assessment of the facilitated applications is part of the creation process.

Recommendation #4:
Level I Practices of Knowledge and Contemporary Indigenous Studies

"We recommend that the Level I Practices of Knowledge and Contemporary Indigenous Studies courses seek enhanced complementarities that will enable students to understand epistemological differences more fully."

As we continue to refine the new 3-unit Practices of Knowledge course, we will encourage more active, explicit consideration of epistemologies and epistemological differences within it. The instructors of the two named courses will also be encouraged to confer and discuss potential complementarities if it proves appropriate (recognizing that the Indigenous Studies course also needs to meet the needs and priorities of the Indigenous Studies Department).

Dean's Response: (VPTL)

- I appreciate the ongoing consultative process that guides courses development and refinement in the Arts and Sciences Program. I am confident that the Director will manage the conversations with the instructors of the Level 1 Practices of Knowledge and Contemporary Indigenous Studies courses.

Recommendation #5:
Feedback on Academic Writing courses

"We also recommend that the Academic Writing course balance individual and collaborative writing exercises and sequence them in a way that feedback is made available for both types of writing. We encourage recruiting more TAs to enable more meaningful individual feedback and mentorship for students to strengthen their writing skills."

We will explore the balance of individual and collaborative writing activities in this course, and pursue the idea of securing additional graduate TAs for it.

Dean's Response: (VPTL)

- As Arts & Science is an undergraduate program, I appreciate the challenges of securing graduate TAs with the skills to support the writing development of the undergraduate students. MOUs secured with participating Faculties may help to stabilize TA support.

Recommendation #6:
Undergraduate thesis supervision

"To optimize interdisciplinarity, we recommend that students and faculty advisors have the option of having a primary advisor *and* a second reader [for student theses], each hailing from distinct or perhaps cognate academic disciplines."
While we understand this suggestion, we are not in a position to act on it at this point, given that Arts & Science students are graciously supervised by faculty from across campus, and we cannot ensure sufficient faculty resources to enable such a model.
Dean's Response: (VPTL) • I appreciate the response of the Director. There is no way to currently guarantee participation of faculty from across campus to support this model.
Recommendation #7: *Communications staff role* "We recommend that an additional administrative position be created that would support logistical, budgetary, and communication services of Arts & Science with perhaps 75% or at least 50% employment."
We appreciate the suggestion that additional staff support might be valuable, and will consult with the Provost (via the budget process) about resourcing such a request. Rather than focusing primarily on logistical and budgetary support, we believe an additional staff position would be best focused on outreach (broadly defined), as such a position could assist with meeting the communications needs highlighted throughout the IQAP process as well as with other key outreach initiatives relevant to priorities highlighted by the reviewers (including recruitment and admissions processes, ongoing alumni engagement efforts and related efforts to support students' understanding of career trajectories).
Dean's Response: (VPTL) • There have been ongoing conversations about communications support that would include outreach, recruitment, alumni engagement. We have discussed a shared role with other units within the VPTL envelope. While we will hold on to this as a possibility in the future, current budgetary constraints will make it difficult to act upon now.

Recommendation #8: *Student mapping of their work-life trajectories* "the program's leadership should be mindful of students' need to map out their work-life trajectories in a gradual manner as they progress. For this to happen, full information on electives, their pre-requisites, and term availability of courses should be provided in the early stages of the program."
Such information is provided to students to the best of our ability throughout their studies (e.g., through annual combined honours program info sessions, one-on-one consultation, etc.) Nevertheless, we will continue to explore ways of enhancing the communication of this information.
Dean's Response: (VPTL) • The Arts & Science program has excellent in-person supports to guide and mentor students. I think that this is also a broader question across campus on how to provide information to students on elective options, including concurrent certificates, minors, and microcredentials.

There will be collaborative work with the other Associate Deans across Faculties to discuss models for student guidance.

Recommendation #9:
Disciplinary diversity of alumni careers

"We recommend ensuring that alumni in fields beyond medicine, law and business be invited to share their experiences – both rewards and challenges— in their chosen fields."

We agree that this is vital, and note that alumni working in a large range of fields are invited to participate in events like the New World of Work Forum (NWWF) and the Alumni Experience Inquiry course, and featured in spaces like the Alumni Corner on our website. We will continue this process, and look to refine and enhance it where possible. The potential addition of the staff position described above, and a review of the NWWF (about to commence) provide concrete opportunities to explore ways in which we might further enhance opportunities for alumni in a wide range of fields to share their experiences.

Dean's Response: (VPTL)

- I appreciate that the Director has already begun to address this issue through the New World of Work Forum (NWWF). This will continue to be an ongoing priority. As indicated, this would benefit from new staff support.

Recommendation #10:
Review of application and admission criteria; foundational ethics of social justice and responsibility

"We recommend a review of application and admission criteria to ascertain that incoming Arts & Science students have some foundational ethics of social justice and responsibility."

Cultivating and supporting social awareness is indeed a key feature of the program, while the capacity to inquire meaningfully into issues of social concern is one of its central learning outcomes. With this in mind, we recently added a question to our supplementary application that asks students to outline and explain a question they have about the world and why it is significant to them. This question might generate responses that could begin to speak to applicants' interest in issues of social import, and thereby help to address the recommendation above. At the same time, we don't wish to *require* that incoming students already have extensive foundational knowledge in this area, as openness to learning about and developing their knowledge, skills, and attitudes is more significant. We will seek to further assess and respond as appropriate to these questions/tensions in our review of application procedures.

Dean's Response: (VPTL)

- I appreciate that the Director is attentive to both the skills and attitudes of the incoming students, as well as their potential to grow and develop. There are ongoing assessments of the application questions that will help to address this recommendation.

Recommendation #11: *Post-graduate tracer study* "We recommend carrying out a tracer study of Arts & Science graduates."
While we do not currently have the resources for such a study, and do already maintain a list of Arts & Science alumni, which—wherever possible—includes information about their trajectories post-graduation, we note that the addition of an outreach staff role might allow us to update this list and follow up with alumni in a more systematic way.
Dean's Response: (VPTL) • I agree with the Director, there is good foundational data already collected. Maintaining and updating this data will require an additional staff member to support this work.

Recommendation #12: *Countering Eurocentrism and white supremacy in curriculum* "Calls to counter Eurocentrism and white supremacy in university courses and programs, and questions about how additional areas of disciplinary/ interdisciplinary study might be incorporated into the curriculum are issues flagged in the self-study as potential areas of enhancement. So too is ongoing review of program pedagogy. In addition to recruitment and hiring practices that prioritize faculty expertise in non-Western, Indigenous, Global South, and Third World perspectives, research areas, and methodologies, we think these kinds of issues are valuably addressed in an iterative, collaborative way. Hence one of our main recommendations is about ensuring a forum to discuss and deepen the generative opportunities that differing perspectives about such maters offer."
We appreciate the reviewers' emphasis on importance of continuing to work on these articulated program priorities, and on the need to do so in an "iterative, collaborative way." We have made preliminary strides in this direction (e.g., by initiating and planning conversations with students, faculty, and staff about equity in admissions processes; by taking initial steps toward developing a new upper-level Inquiry course that will offer students a chance to engage deeply with non-Northern/non-Western political theory (beginning with an offering focused on engaging with Gandhi and responses to / reverberations of his thought); by reaching out to colleagues at the MacPherson Institute about potentially supporting discussions with faculty about equitable and anti-racist pedagogy). We are aware of the need to continue and extend these efforts, and will work to do so in a way that is responsive and collaborative, rather than following a pre-set plan.
Dean's Response: (VPTL) • I appreciate the detailed and thoughtful response of the Director. Curriculum continues to evolve and to be informed by the global context. I agree with the reviewers that this is an issue that needs constant attention. While Arts & Science often does not choose which permanent/tenured faculty are assigned to teach from across campus, there is on-going support and resources available through the MacPherson Institute and the Equity and

Inclusion Office to inform anti-racist pedagogies. There are also potential ways to bring postdoctoral fellows into the teaching program to bring in new perspectives and lived experiences.

Recommendation #13:
Faculty diversity

"A number of students noted that the faculty is lacking in diversity."

We agree that this is an important concern, and one which we have been actively trying to address. We have made initial strides toward increasing the diversity of our faculty complement by securing funds (in collaboration with the Department of Philosophy) to recruit a Black Philosopher, who will have responsibilities to both Arts & Science and Philosophy. This will initially be a 3-year contractually limited appointment, though we are hopeful it might be renewed and ultimately converted into a tenure-track role. The program director has also had initial conversations with the Deans of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Science about the possibility of other cross-appointments. Should such cross-appointments prove possible, we will explore whether they might be targeted to faculty who identify as members of equity-denied groups. We will also ensure that any new faculty/instructor hiring processes in which the Program is involved will align with principles of employment equity.

Dean's Response: (VPTL)

- I appreciate the Director's awareness of this issue and recognize that they are limited in directly addressing it. Faculty members are not normally hired to teach in Arts & Science. I think that the suggestion to explore cross-appointments would be beneficial, either in tenured/permanent, contract, or postdoctoral roles.

Recommendation #14:
Digital specialist

"Continue to pursue a digital specialist - possibly from the alumni roster who has appropriate expertise and highly values the Arts & Science Program - to enhance and improve the public face of the program not limited to its website but to develop potentially living content through a suite of social media formats and platforms."

Please see the point about a new staff role above. Our hope is that a skilled 'outreach' person could enhance our communications as well as contribute to maintaining and enhancing related efforts connected to recruitment and admissions and alumni engagement.

Dean's Response: (VPTL)

- I agree, this is another example of the need for a communications/outreach staff role with the appropriate digital skills.

Recommendation #15:
Balance between encouraging curiosity and learning with the realistic considerations of carving a career pathway

"Aspire to achieve a balance between encouraging curiosity and learning with the realistic considerations of carving a career pathway. We recommend that students undergo a reflection session with Academic Coordinators, Alumni and the Director at the end of Level II with regards to possible trajectories in terms of Minor/Major undertakings for more long term and strategic decision making at a later stage."
Students are currently invited to a Combined Honours session held in March of each year (while this is tailored particularly to Level I students, any student with interests in/questions about combining can attend). As noted elsewhere, we will continue to refine and build on this session given the feedback offered in the IQAP and in other conversations with students. Looking forward, we will assess whether this session might be fruitfully expanded to more thoroughly consider issues outside of Combined Honours programs, or supplemented by other relevant programming (time and resources permitting). .
Dean's Response: (VPTL) • There are an increasing number of skills-focussed concurrent certificates and minors, including interdisciplinary minors, that are open to all students across campus. There is also a need for tools and resources to allow students across all of our Faculties to navigate to those opportunities. The Director will be involved in those broader conversations.

Recommendation #16: *Partnered forums for course development, career planning, student impact* "We recommend regular inter-year, student/faculty/ program administrator/ director gatherings with a thematic focus because certain recurrent themes, indeed points of contention, could provide opportunities for generative, insightful dialogue when approached in a deliberate, collaborative way." (The reviewers highlight the particular value of forums focused on the following: (1) course content and teaching methods, and in particular the aim of countering Eurocentrism in curricula; (2) plotting one's academic trajectory; (3) helping students make a difference in society now and after graduation)."
We are grateful for the opportunities we have in Arts & Science program to have such gatherings and discussions, and will continue to build on these opportunities where it is practicable and effective to do so. Currently, we are pursuing two initiatives related to the highlighted areas: - The point about further supporting discussion of academic trajectories will inform our annual 'combined honours information session'. This session is led by the Director and students interested in combining/who have questions about combining are encouraged to attend. The feedback from the IQAP, and, indeed, from ongoing discussions with students, will inform this session this year, and we will continue to explore how this session might be refined and enhanced going forward. - We are about to undertake a review of the New World of Work Forum, which has for the past 5 years offered a key opportunity for students, alumni, and faculty to come together and discuss work in a wide range of fields. This review should help us better understand the successes of the NWWF and plan for the future of the gift that funds it. Such plans may include developing initiatives (forums

or otherwise) that support the kind of socially-conscious career planning and alumni engagement highlighted in the reviewers' recommendation (though, of course, they must align with the aims of the gift itself first and foremost). While the NWWF has been paused this year, we are planning a one-day panel event to be held in its place, focused on the question of how we might make workplaces more equitable and just. This event, which will feature a range of speakers and hopefully bring together Arts & Science students, faculty, staff, and alumni, stands itself to offer an example of the kind of forum for which the reviewers call.

As noted elsewhere, we are also running discussions this term (initially between the Director and members of particular equity-denied groups, with openness to expanding on these) on the theme of equity in recruitment and admissions and ways in which our recruitment and admissions processes might better contribute to countering systemic inequities. These discussions will complement similar conversations (some of which have already been initiated) with program instructors and staff, and with relevant campus partners.) While this is not a particular 'forum theme' highlighted by the reviewers, it is in line with other suggestions highlighted in the report and offers another potential example of the collaborative approach to advancing key program priorities suggested.

We will also maintain the several existing avenues for feedback and discussion about curriculum and pedagogy that already exist.

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Dean's Response: (VPTL)

- I appreciate the thoughtful response of the Director. The Arts & Science community of students, staff, and faculty do tend to be very collaborative and responsive in their curriculum development and co-curricular creation. I am confident that the actions noted by the Director above will address the recommendation of the reviewers.
- I will also note that the McMaster Students as Partners program originated in Arts & Science and provides opportunities for students and faculty to work together on curriculum review and redesign. This spirit, fostered in Arts & Science, has spread across campus.

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 (as stated in the reviewers' report)	**Proposed Follow-Up**	**Responsibility for Leading Follow-Up**	**Timeline for Addressing Recommendation**
"We recommend that the program and university enhance its level of internal and external communications about the program."	As noted in the self-study, enhancing our communications is an ongoing and as yet unresolved concern. To help us respond meaningfully to this important suggestion, we hope to create an 'outreach' focused staff position (described further below). The person in such a position could also interface with University communications staff in order to support the University's communications about the program where appropriate.	Program Director	Position to be proposed in FY24 budget.
"We recommend that the program continue with developing a facilitated supplementary application process for potential students from equity-denied groups, but as part of a broader review of existing admission requirements, processes, and practices."	Conversations about recruitment and admissions processes (including potential development of a facilitated application process of relevance to the program) are underway, and will involve students, faculty, and staff. Alongside potential additions to the supplementary application process, other ideas being explored (suggested initially by Access Program Manager Celeste Licorish) include developing a stream of the highly successful McMaster Discovery Program that would engage students who are in/just post high school and identify as members of equity denied groups, and paid student 'equity-champion' positions to aid in recruitment efforts.	Program Director, in partnership with program faculty, staff, and students.	Underway, in the hopes of rolling out initial refinements for the 2023-24 recruitment and application cycle.

"We recommend clearer, more transparent policies governing how equity, diversity and inclusion principles are meant to inform the way supplementary application assessments are made. In conjunction, we recommend reviewing the design and content of the training/ information sessions, while adding follow-up opportunities for the application reviewers to identify any challenges and to develop best practices."	Work to consider such policies and principles, as well as a review of the training processes, will be factored into the efforts to continue reviewing and enhancing our recruitment and admissions procedures described above. It is already the case that supplementary application reviewers are invited to offer feedback on the process each year. We will ensure that this process is maintained.	See above	See above
"We recommend that the Level I Practices of Knowledge and Contemporary Indigenous Studies courses seek enhanced complementarities that will enable students to understand epistemological differences more fully."	As we continue to refine the new 3-unit Practices of Knowledge course, we will encourage more active, explicit consideration of epistemologies and epistemological differences within it. The instructors of the two named courses will also be encouraged to confer and discuss potential complementarities if it proves appropriate (recognizing that the Indigenous Studies course also needs to meet the needs and priorities of the Indigenous Studies Department).	Relevant course instructors, with the support of the Program Director.	2023-24 academic year.

"We also recommend that the Academic Writing course balance individual and collaborative writing exercises and sequence them in a way that feedback is made available for both types of writing. We encourage recruiting more TAs to enable more meaningful individual feedback and mentorship for students to strengthen their writing skills."	We will explore the balance of individual and collaborative writing activities in this course, and pursue the idea of securing additional graduate TAs for it.	Program Director, relevant course instructor	Additional TA support will be factored into the FY24 budget submission. Potential revisions to the course design will be considered for the 2023-24 offering.
"To optimize interdisciplinarity, we recommend that students and faculty advisors have the option of having a primary advisor *and* a second reader [for student theses], each hailing from distinct or perhaps cognate academic disciplines."	While we understand this suggestion, we are not in a position to act on it at this point, given that Arts & Science students are graciously supervised by faculty from across campus, and we cannot ensure sufficient faculty resources to enable such a model.	n/a	n/a
"We recommend that an additional administrative position be created that would support logistical, budgetary, and communication services of Arts & Science with perhaps	We appreciate the suggestion that additional staff support might be valuable, and will consult with the Provost (via the budget process) about resourcing such a request. Rather than focusing primarily on logistical and budgetary support, we believe an additional staff position would be best focused on outreach (broadly defined), as such a position could assist with meeting the	Program Director	Position to be proposed in the FY24 budget.

75% or at least 50% employment."	communications needs highlighted throughout the IQAP process as well as with other key outreach initiatives relevant to priorities highlighted by the reviewers (including recruitment and admissions processes, ongoing alumni engagement efforts and related efforts to support students' understanding of career trajectories).		
"the program's leadership should be mindful of students' need to map out their work-life trajectories in a gradual manner as they progress. For this to happen, full information on electives, their pre-requisites, and term availability of courses should be provided in the early stages of the program."	Such information is provided to students to the best of our ability throughout their studies (e.g., through annual combined honours program info sessions, one-on-one consultation, etc.) Nevertheless, we will continue to explore ways of enhancing the communication of this information.	Academic Program Administrators, Program Director	2023-24 to 2025-26 academic years
"We recommend ensuring that alumni in fields beyond medicine, law and business be invited to share their experiences – both rewards and challenges— in their chosen fields."	We agree that this is vital, and note that alumni working in a large range of fields are invited to participate in events like the New World of Work Forum (NWWF) and the Alumni Experience Inquiry course, and featured in spaces like the Alumni Corner on our website. We will continue this process, and look to refine and enhance it where possible. The potential addition of the staff position described above, and a review of the NWWF (about to commence) provide concrete opportunities to explore ways in which we might further	Director, Academic Program Administrators, New Outreach Coordinator	Ongoing

	enhance opportunities for alumni in a wide range of fields to share their experiences.		
"We recommend a review of application and admission criteria to ascertain that incoming Arts & Science students have some foundational ethics of social justice and responsibility."	Cultivating and supporting social awareness is indeed a key feature of the program, while the capacity to inquire meaningfully into issues of social concern is one of its central learning outcomes. With this in mind, we recently added a question to our supplementary application that asks students to outline and explain a question they have about the world and why it is significant to them. This question might generate responses that could begin to speak to applicants' interest in issues of social import, and thereby help to address the recommendation above. At the same time, we don't wish to *require* that incoming students already have extensive foundational knowledge in this area, as openness to learning about and developing their knowledge, skills, and attitudes is more significant. We will seek to further assess and respond as appropriate to these questions/tensions in our review of application procedures.	See above points about the review of application and admissions processes	See above points about the review of application and admissions processes
"We recommend carrying out a tracer study of Arts & Science graduates."	While we do not currently have the resources for such a study, and do already maintain a list of Arts & Science alumni, which—wherever possible—includes information about their trajectories post-graduation, we note that the addition of an outreach staff role might allow us to update this list and follow up with alumni in a more systematic way.	n/a; New Outreach Coordinator	2024, and then ongoing thereafter

"Calls to counter Eurocentrism and white supremacy in university courses and programs, and questions about how additional areas of disciplinary/ interdisciplinary study might be incorporated into the curriculum are issues flagged in the self-study as potential areas of enhancement. So too is ongoing review of program pedagogy. In addition to recruitment and hiring practices that prioritize faculty expertise in non-Western, Indigenous, Global South, and Third World perspectives, research areas, and methodologies, we think these kinds of issues are valuably addressed in an iterative, collaborative way. Hence one of our main recommendations is about ensuring a forum to discuss and deepen the generative opportunities that differing perspectives about such maters offer."	We appreciate the reviewers' emphasis on importance of continuing to work on these articulated program priorities, and on the need to do so in an "iterative, collaborative way." We have made preliminary strides in this direction (e.g., by initiating and planning conversations with students, faculty, and staff about equity in admissions processes; by taking initial steps toward developing a new upper-level Inquiry course that will offer students a chance to engage deeply with non-Northern/non-Western political theory (beginning with an offering focused on engaging with Gandhi and responses to / reverberations of his thought); by reaching out to colleagues at the MacPherson Institute about potentially supporting discussions with faculty about equitable and anti-racist pedagogy). We are aware of the need to continue and extend these efforts, and will work to do so in a way that is responsive and collaborative, rather than following a pre-set plan.	Program Director, Council of Instructors	Admissions and recruitment discussions ongoing. New course to be offered for the first time in 2023-24 (under a Special Topics course code, and potentially submitted as an ongoing curriculum addition in Fall 2023). Potential meeting/retreat supported by MacPherson Institute staff in 2023-24.
"A number of students noted that the faculty is lacking in diversity."	We agree that this is an important concern, and one which we have been actively trying to address. We have made initial strides toward	Program Director, in collaboration with relevant campus partners where appropriate.	CLA faculty search in Winter 2023, in the hopes of having

	increasing the diversity of our faculty complement by securing funds (in collaboration with the Department of Philosophy) to recruit a Black Philosopher, who will have responsibilities to both Arts & Science and Philosophy. This will initially be a 3-year contractually limited appointment, though we are hopeful it might be renewed and ultimately converted into a tenure-track role. The program director has also had initial conversations with the Deans of Humanities, Social Sciences, and Science about the possibility of other cross-appointments. Should such cross-appointments prove possible, we will explore whether they might be targeted to faculty who identify as members of equity-denied groups. We will also ensure that any new faculty/instructor hiring processes in which the Program is involved will align with principles of employment equity.		someone in place for the 2023-24 year. Additional conversations with relevant Chairs/Deans across the 2023-24 and 2024-25 years.
"Continue to pursue a digital specialist - possibly from the alumni roster who has appropriate expertise and highly values the Arts & Science Program - to enhance and improve the public face of the program not limited to its website but to develop potentially living content through a suite of social media formats and platforms."	Please see the point about a new staff role above. Our hope is that a skilled 'outreach' person could enhance our communications as well as contribute to maintaining and enhancing related efforts connected to recruitment and admissions and alumni engagement.	Program Director, New Outreach Coordinator	Position to be proposed in FY24 budget.

"Aspire to achieve a balance between encouraging curiosity and learning with the realistic considerations of carving a career pathway. We recommend that students undergo a reflection session with Academic Coordinators, Alumni and the Director at the end of Level II with regards to possible trajectories in terms of Minor/Major undertakings for more long term and strategic decision making at a later stage."	Students are currently invited to a Combined Honours session held in March of each year (while this is tailored particularly to Level I students, any student with interests in/questions about combining can attend). As noted elsewhere, we will continue to refine and build on this session given the feedback offered in the IQAP and in other conversations with students. Looking forward, we will assess whether this session might be fruitfully expanded to more thoroughly consider issues outside of Combined Honours programs, or supplemented by other relevant programming (time and resources permitting).	Program Director, Academic Program Administrators	Initial attention will be paid to these issues in preparing the Combined Honours Info Session in Winter 2023, with the potential for more sustained/ extensive consideration following in 2024-25.
"We recommend regular inter-year, student/faculty/ program administrator/ director gatherings with a thematic focus because certain recurrent themes, indeed points of contention, could provide opportunities for generative, insightful dialogue when approached in a deliberate, collaborative way." (The reviewers highlight the particular value of forums focused on the following: (1) course content and teaching methods, and in particular the aim of	We are grateful for the opportunities we have in Arts & Science program to have such gatherings and discussions, and will continue to build on these opportunities where it is practicable and effective to do so. Currently, we are pursuing two initiatives related to the highlighted areas: - The point about further supporting discussion of academic trajectories will inform our annual 'combined honours information session'. This session is led by the Director and students interested in combining/who have questions about combining are encouraged to attend. The feedback from the IQAP, and, indeed, from ongoing discussions with students, will inform this session this year, and we will continue to	Director and Academic Program Administrators, in collaboration with program students and faculty.	Specific initiatives described at left are underway / being rolled out in Winter 2023.

countering Eurocentrism in curricula; (2) plotting one's academic trajectory; (3) helping students make a difference in society now and after graduation)."	explore how this session might be refined and enhanced going forward. - We are about to undertake a review of the New World of Work Forum, which has for the past 5 years offered a key opportunity for students, alumni, and faculty to come together and discuss work in a wide range of fields. This review should help us better understand the successes of the NWWF and plan for the future of the gift that funds it. Such plans may include developing initiatives (forums or otherwise) that support the kind of socially-conscious career planning and alumni engagement highlighted in the reviewers' recommendation (though, of course, they must align with the aims of the gift itself first and foremost). While the NWWF has been paused this year, we are planning a one-day panel event to be held in its place, focused on the question of how we might make workplaces more equitable and just. This event, which will feature a range of speakers and hopefully bring together Arts & Science students, faculty, staff, and alumni, stands itself to offer an example of the kind of forum for which the reviewers call. As noted elsewhere, we are also running discussions this term (initially between the Director and members of particular equity-denied groups, with openness to expanding on these) on the theme of equity in recruitment and admissions and ways in which our recruitment and admissions processes might better contribute to countering systemic inequities. These discussions will complement similar conversations (some of which have		

	already been initiated) with program instructors and staff, and with relevant campus partners.) While this is not a particular 'forum theme' highlighted by the reviewers, it is in line with other suggestions highlighted in the report and offers another potential example of the collaborative approach to advancing key program priorities suggested. We will also maintain the several existing avenues for feedback and discussion about curriculum and pedagogy that already exist.		

Quality Assurance Committee Recommendation

McMaster's Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) reviewed the above documentation at the March 19, 2026, meeting. The committee recommends that the **Arts and Science (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.

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 LDO 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 LD0 program by providing a clear framework to ensure consistency across cohorts.	class workshops that are clearly related to the objectives of the LD0 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** **Program Director** **Program Director** **Program Director** **Program Director** **Program Director** **Program Director** **Program Director** **Program Director**	**Summer 2025** **Fall/Winter 2025/2026** **Fall/Winter 2025/2026 – through Fall 2026** **Fall/Winter 2025/2026** **Fall/Winter 2025/2026** **Summer 2026** **Winter 2026** **Summer 2025** **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**

accessible to international students.	• 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	**Program Director** **Program Director** and **Program Administrator**	**Summer 2025** **Fall 2025**
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.	• 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.	**Program Director**	**Fall 2026**
Recommendation #10: Recruitment and Gender Balance. The report makes note of the higher proportion of female students in IBH cohorts and suggests attempts to remedy the imbalance.	• Target at least 25% of ambassadors attending Fall Preview and May @ Mac are male. • Ensure that our videos promoting the IBH program, its participants and alumni weight male participants to the same degree as female participants. • Emphasize careers that may have more appeal to male applicants including consulting, finance, law, and entrepreneurship. This will include in recruitment materials and other direct outreach efforts.	**Program Administrator** **Program Administrator** **Program Administrator** **Program Director**	**Fall 2025** **Fall 2025 – Ongoing** **Fall 2025 – Ongoing** **Fall 2025**

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

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.

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Institutional Quality Assurance Program (IQAP) Review

Economics (Graduate and Undergraduate programs)

Date of Review: March 4th and 5th, 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 Economics undergraduate and graduate programs. 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 Economics department submitted a self-study in December 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 virtual site visit to McMaster University on March 4th and 4th, 2025. The review included interviews with the Deputy Provost; Acting Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning and Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, Faculty Dean, Associate Deans of graduate and undergraduate studies, Chair of the department, and meetings with groups of current students, full-time faculty and support staff.

The Chair of the Economics department along with the Chair of Graduate Studies and the Chair of Undergraduate Studies submitted responses to the Reviewers' Report (June 2025). Specific recommendations were discussed and clarifications and corrections were presented. Follow-up actions and timelines were included.

Strengths

The reviewers present a generally positive assessment of the Department and its educational programs. In terms of departmental strengths, the reviewers highlighted its sustained excellence in both academic and policy-oriented research, numerous research chair positions, and a collegial environment that fosters positive relationships among faculty, staff, and students. They also praised the Department's strong and forward-thinking leadership. Furthermore, the reviewers noted that both research-stream and teaching-stream faculty are highly qualified, with departmental activities supported by a dedicated staff team.

On the educational front, they recognized a strong commitment to undergraduate and graduate education, as well as a wise allocation of instructional resources. The curriculum was found to be well-developed and continuously evolving, providing 'a rigorous but practical education at all levels.' Regarding admissions, the reviewers confirmed that the requirements are appropriate at both the graduate and undergraduate levels. They also concluded that the Program Learning Outcomes (PLOs) are well-defined and that assessment methods are effective for both academic levels. Additionally, they remarked that the time-to-degree is within the normal range for both graduate and undergraduate students and noted that placement records for all three graduate programs are strong.

Opportunities for Improvement and Enhancement, including appropriateness of resources

Faculty Complement: The reviewers repeatedly emphasized the department's shortage of faculty members in applied microeconomics, following two departures and a retirement. They noted that this gap reduces course availability and weakens the depth of content in undergraduate applied micro field courses. Moreover, they highlighted that the affected areas are among the most policy-relevant, making the shortage particularly impactful. This lack of faculty members not only affects undergraduate programs but also raises concerns about the sustainability and quality of the MAEP program, which has a strong focus on economic policy. Additionally, the reviewers expressed concerns about the department's growing reliance on sessional instructors, a challenge linked to the reduction in faculty complement.

Undergraduate Student Experience: The reviewers strongly recommend that the department continue building on recent successful initiatives to foster a stronger sense of community among undergraduate students. Strengthening engagement and connection among students will further enrich their academic experience and contribute to their overall success.

Graduate Program Structure: The reviewers advocate for reducing the number of PhD fields, which is expected to enhance the graduate student experience by increasing program flexibility. It would also strengthen faculty confidence in course enrollment, helping to prevent cancellations and avoiding teaching for less than full credit.

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

Recommendation #1: **Rebuild the department's capacity in applied microeconomics**, particularly in the fields of labour economics and health economics. This should take the form of an immediate hire in labour economics, and an explicit plan to hire in applied fields over the next five years.
Department's Response and Actions to be Taken: The Department fully agrees with the reviewers' recommendation. In January 2025, Department Chairs in the Faculty of Social Sciences submitted faculty renewal plans to the Dean. Our plan requested two positions in applied microeconomics, with labour and health economics as top priorities, and a proposed start date of July 1, 2026. At the end of April, the Department was informed that a tenure-stream hire in applied microeconomics, with a start date of July 1, 2026, had been approved. Given the current budgetary constraints, the Department is grateful to have been allocated a faculty position. At its upcoming retreat in June, the Department will discuss hiring priorities for the next five years. The fields recommended by the reviewers on page 18 of their report—labour, health, environmental, and experimental economics—are expected to be central to the discussion. The outcome of this conversation will shape the next version of the Department's Faculty Renewal Plan, which the Department Chair will use to advocate for additional faculty positions.
Dean's Response: Having increased the size of the department's faculty complement in recent years, it was disappointing to lose three faculty members, all in applied microeconomics, at the start of the 2024-25 academic year. The commitment of a faculty hire at the assistant or junior associate level for July 1, 2026 is the first step in rebuilding the department's strength in applied micro. The challenge, simply put, is resources. Social Sciences currently projects fiscal deficits in the coming years and faces important needs across a number of departments. There is not simple, straightforward solution to this challenge. However, the Dean's Office will continue to work with the department to explore ways to strengthen the faculty complement in a fiscally constrained environment.

Recommendation #2: **Take all available actions to build stronger cohorts in the undergraduate program.**
Department's Response and Actions to be Taken: As noted by the reviewers, the Department recognizes the importance of fostering stronger cohorts. The introduction of the mathematics-focused economics course ECON 1M03 in 2022, taken almost exclusively by economics students, serves as a key component of the Department's strategy to enhance a sense of community within the program.

The Department acknowledges that further efforts are needed in this area. It will continue the initiatives introduced in 2024-25, including the Welcome event in September and a dedicated seminar for undergraduate students, while also encouraging faculty participation in Meet the Profs events. Additionally, the Department has recently committed to supporting the creation of an Economics Magazine by the McMaster Economic Society (MES).

Looking ahead, the Undergraduate Studies Committee, Undergraduate Administrative Assistant, and MES representatives will explore additional initiatives to strengthen the sense of community and foster connections between students and faculty members. The Department will consider incorporating group work into ECON 1M03, as suggested by the reviewers.

The reviewers also recommended holding an annual Honours List reception. However, with approximately 100 students on the Dean's Honours list annually, a reception for all honours students would not be financially feasible and would limit meaningful interactions between students and faculty. Recognizing the value of acknowledging student achievements, the Department will develop plans for a reception format that is engaging, cost-effective, and conducive to faculty-student interaction.

Dean's Response:

The department recognizes and is responding to the need to create a strong sense of community among cohorts of undergraduate students in the program. This includes efforts along two complementary dimensions: first, simply among the program students themselves, and second, between program students and faculty. The nature of the relevant activities and the associated financial costs of strategies may differ systematically across these two dimensions, and offer opportunities for a wider array of helpful interactions.

Recommendation #3:
Reduce the field requirements in the PhD program from two fields to one.

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:
As noted in their report, the IQAP reviewers highlight that PhD field requirements directly influence the number of courses the department must offer, which in turn affects graduate course enrollment. Low enrollment in graduate courses has been a concern among faculty, as it can result in teaching assignments worth less than full credit, an issue also addressed in the discussion surrounding Recommendation 8. The reviewers further observed that reducing field requirements would benefit PhD students by allowing them to begin research earlier. The above concerns were also echoed by the external reviewers who assessed the Department in Fall 2024 as part of the standard review conducted in the final year of the Department Chair's term.

The two review reports clearly indicate that the department must reassess the requirements of its graduate programs. The recommendation regarding PhD field requirements will be incorporated into a broader review of graduate programs, scheduled for this Summer and Fall. At the doctoral level, this review will examine key aspects such as the number of fields (many specialized fields *vs.* fewer broad fields), course requirements per field, the total number of fields students must complete, and

whether certain comprehensive exams should be eliminated. To ensure a student perspective, the department will survey both incoming and senior doctoral students about the proposed changes to the PhD program requirements

Any proposed changes to PhD field requirements will be subject to a departmental vote in Fall 2025. If approved, the revisions will take effect for the cohort entering in September 2026.

Dean's Response:

As the department notes, the structure of the graduate program was also the focus of recommendations of a recent, broader external departmental review. This recommendation reflects larger trends in graduate training in the discipline of economics. The department is responding to these recommendations and is currently in the midst of a strategic planning exercise for which this is a key area of focus. It is critical that the department examine both the number of fields it offers and the curriculum requirements for each field. These issues also relate to recommendations that graduate students should engage more and earlier in research.

Recommendation #4:
Continue to monitor continuation statistics for Econ 1 students and take appropriate action if they do not improve on the 2022/23 results.

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:
The significant increase in ECON 1 students failing out of McMaster in 2022-23—approximately 20%, compared to around 10% in the previous three years—was a concerning trend identified during the preparation of the IQAP self-study document. However, the latest data through 2024-25 indicate that the percentage has returned to approximately 10%.

The Department has contacted the FSS data analyst to inquire about available data on ECON 1 students who have failed out of McMaster since the 2019-20 academic year, when ECON 1 was introduced. If sufficient data are available, we will seek to identify potential explanatory factors to determine whether any departmental actions could help reduce the number of students leaving the university.

Beyond analyzing historical data, the Department will continue to monitor continuation statistics, as recommended by the reviewers.

Dean's Response:

The department is responding effectively to understand both the extent to which the data point cited is part of a longer term trend of a single-year blip and how the department can respond to improve retention more generally within the program.

Recommendation #5:
Coordinate intermediate microeconomics content more clearly with third- and fourth-year courses that rely on that material.

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:
While Level III and IV course instructors can easily determine the level at which microeconomic theory is taught in the intermediate micro sequence, a Department-led initiative would still be beneficial. Therefore, the 2025-26 Undergraduate Studies Committee will establish a Microeconomic Curriculum Subcommittee to communicate to instructors the topics covered and the level at which they are addressed in ECON 2Z03 and ECON 2ZZ3.

Additionally, since the intermediate macroeconomic theory sequence is set to be updated for 2025-26, a Macroeconomic Curriculum Subcommittee will also be formed to ensure consistency and alignment in course content.

Dean's Response:

The department's response is appropriate.

Recommendation #6:
Take steps to ensure greater exam security in fully remote courses, e.g., by adopting remote invigilation software or by scheduling in-person exams during the first week of fall classes.

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:
As noted by the reviewers in their report, their recommendation applies specifically to Spring/Summer online courses, as all Fall and Winter term courses include some in-person testing. The examiners proposed two specific solutions: first, using remote invigilation software such as Respondus. However, the University will no longer approve its use by McMaster instructors after July 1, 2025. The second suggestion is to schedule final exams for Spring/Summer courses in the first week of Fall classes. While the department agrees with this proposal, current University policy does not permit it.

Like the reviewers, the Department is deeply concerned about academic integrity in online courses where all assessments are conducted online. This concern is reinforced by feedback from instructors teaching online courses this Spring, who report that students' grades on assessments are significantly higher than in previous years when they taught the same courses online. The department will take the following actions in response to the reviewers' recommendation to enhance exam security in fully remote courses:

(1) Propose a regulatory change to allow final exams for Spring/Summer courses to be held in September.
(2) Offer some Spring/Summer online courses with an in-person final exam in 2026. Since most Spring/Summer 2025 courses are online with remote assessments, this will allow us to evaluate the impact of requiring one in-person assessment on enrollment.
(3) Explore the feasibility of offering in-person exams off-campus, including internationally, for a small subset of Spring/Summer 2026 online courses. This pilot initiative will help assess logistics and scalability for large-enrollment courses, given that approximately 2,000 students

take Spring/Summer courses. The department will require support for logistical arrangements and financial costs.

Dean's Response:

Ensuring academic integrity in fully on-line courses is a challenge across the university. Working with the departments, the Dean's Office will engage with relevant offices in the university to explore ways to address this issue.

Recommendation #7:
When possible, take steps to reduce reliance on sessional instructors.

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:
The recent loss of three faculty members contributes to the department's reliance on sessional lecturers. Regardless of the faculty complement, the Department will continue to diligently monitor undergraduate course enrollment. This ongoing assessment has led to some courses not being offered annually and reductions in the number of sections for some multi-section courses in recent years.

The Department would also like to provide three comments regarding this recommendation:

1. Sessional Instructors: Although many courses are taught by non-permanent faculty each year, a significant number of these courses are led by a small group of instructors whom the Department knows well. Although the issue of varying quality among sessional instructors raised by the external examiners is valid, it is mitigated to some extent by the frequent rehiring of experienced instructors, including a former CLA, former graduate students, and a retired faculty member. However, as the reviewers rightly noted, these individuals will not be available indefinitely.

2. Teaching Plan Considerations: When shaping its teaching plan—including course offerings, section counts, and enrollment caps—the Department must balance multiple factors:
   - Providing a diverse set of courses for students
   - Revenue considerations
   - Costs associated with hiring sessional instructors
   - Meeting demand from non-economics students
   - Availability of qualified sessional instructors for courses not taught by permanent faculty. Finding instructors who ensure a strong student experience is a necessary condition. Occasionally, this condition is not met, leading to the cancellation of courses despite their financial viability

3. Impact of PhD Field Restructuring: The planned restructuring of PhD fields may lead to a reduction in the number of graduate courses offered annually. If this occurs, more undergraduate courses will be taught by permanent faculty members.

Dean's Response:

The Faculty concurs that the proportion of courses taught by non-permanent faculty is higher than desired. While it is driven importantly by resource constraints and the inability to sufficiently expand the permanent faculty complement, it is also partly driven by curriculum design. Working with its educational programs, the Faculty is currently leading a multi-year curriculum review for which one objective is to examine ways we can reduce reliance on non-permanent instructors while also improving the learning experience of students and student success in our programs. Finding a good balance between teaching-stream faculty and tenure-stream faculty can also help address this challenge. The Faculty is committed to working with programs, including economics, on this issue.

Recommendation #8:
Work with the Dean's office to ensure a mutually satisfactory resolution to the issue of teaching credit for small graduate courses

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:
The Department recognizes that the current structure of its PhD program—consisting of multiple fields with two required courses in each—contributes to the number of low-enrollment courses offered. This issue is particularly pronounced in years with lower program admission numbers.

At its June retreat, the Department will begin discussions on restructuring its graduate programs. Specifically, it will explore the possibility of offering fewer, more broadly defined PhD fields, which would reduce the number of field courses required and help increase enrollment in those courses, depending on overall program enrollment. Implementing Recommendation #3 would also contribute to reducing the number of elective courses that need to be offered.

Since proposed changes aimed at increasing student enrollment in field courses will be voted on in the Fall, they will not take effect until the 2026-27 academic year (AY 2026-27). Fortunately, the Dean is willing to be flexible in applying the low-enrollment policy in 2025-26, provided the department implements meaningful curriculum changes to significantly reduce—ideally eliminate—the number of courses with low enrollment moving forward.

Dean's Response:

In part in response to feedback from faculty and the graduate programs, the Faculty chose not to proceed with the "low-course-enrolment" policy proposed this past year. Instead, it will address the issue by working with programs as part of the curriculum planning process. The response of the department of economics noted above is an important part of this process.

Recommendation #9:
Develop a strategy for external fundraising to support cohort-building initiatives and/or graduate funding

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:
The Department acknowledges that it has relied entirely on the FSS advancement team to secure external funding. Until now, the Chair has served as the liaison with the FSS advancement team, which may have resulted in less time and attention being devoted to this effort than if a designated faculty member had been assigned to lead it.

To strengthen engagement and ensure a more dedicated approach to fundraising initiatives, the Department will designate a faculty member as the liaison with the FSS team as part of its annual service tasks and committee assignments.

Dean's Response:

The university is currently preparing for a large campaign and so this is an excellent opportunity for the department to engage more actively in advancement activities. The campaign will include increased engagement with alumni which, as the reviewers note, can be an important source of support for students and undergraduate innovations in particular. The campaign also offers the opportunity to pursue research chairs and other research-focused support to enhance the research mission in ways that can complement it educational programs. While it will be important for a number of departmental faculty members to engage in this work, the chair plays a critical role and must be fully engaged.

Recommendation #10:
As capacity to offer CO-OP expands, we recommend that the department/faculty consider introducing a direct entry stream. We believe this will be an effective tool to help recruit high achieving students to McMaster's FSS undergraduate programs, such as economics.

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:
The Department agrees that creating a direct-entry co-op stream (ECON 1-COOP) would help with student recruitment. Up to now, the ECON CO-OP stream has been managed by the small but very capable team in the Faculty of Social Sciences. The department will work with them to assess the costs and benefits of an ECON 1-COOP stream and the FSS team's capacity to add on this stream.

Dean's Response:

The Faculty is examining the option within the co-op program more generally.

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)
1. Rebuild the department's capacity in applied microeconomics, particularly in the fields of labour economics and health economics.	Fill the tenure-stream faculty position granted to the department. Prepare a 5-year faculty hiring plan.	Department Chair and Chair of the Faculty Recruitment Committee. Department Chair and Associate Chair	April 1, 2026. September 30, 2025.
2. Take all available actions to build stronger cohorts in the undergraduate program.	Repeat the initiatives introduced in 2024-25. Consider incorporating group work into ECON 1ME3. Support the development of the M.E.S. Economics Magazine. Organize an end-of-year reception for econ students	Chair and Undergraduate Chair Undergraduate Chair Chair Chair and Undergraduate Chair	Terminate planning of Fall events by August 1st and Winter events by December 1st. August 2025 December 2025 Terminate planning by Feb. 15th
3. Reduce field requirements in the graduate program.	Discuss PhD field requirements as part of the overall review of the structure of our graduate programs. This will happen over the Summer and Fall. Implement student surveys to bring in a student perspective.	Graduate Chair	Changes to be presented to the department and voted on by the end of 2025.

4. Continue to monitor continuation statistics for Econ 1 students and take appropriate action if they do not improve on the 2022/23 results.	Analyze historical data Monitor continuation statistics	Chair Chair	December 2025 Annually in May
5. Coordinate intermediate microeconomics content more clearly with third- and fourth-year courses that rely on that material.	Create a microeconomic curriculum subcommittee tasked with communicating to other instructors the topics covered as well as the level at which they are covered in ECON 2Z03 and 2ZZ3. Create a parallel subcommittee for macroeconomics.	Chair Chair	August 2025
6. Take steps to ensure greater exam security in fully remote courses	(1) Propose a regulatory change to allow final exams for Spring/Summer courses to be held in September. (2) Offer some Spring/Summer online courses with an in-person final exam in 2026 and assess the impact on enrollment. (3) Explore the feasibility of offering in-person exams off-campus, including internationally.	Chair and Undergraduate Chair	August 2026
7. When possible, take steps to reduce reliance on sessional instructors.	Continue monitoring enrollment and reduce the number of sections offered when enrollment declines.	Chair	Ongoing.

8. Work with the Dean's office to ensure a mutually satisfactory resolution to the issue of teaching credit for small graduate courses.	An arrangement has already been made with the Dean for AY 2025-26.	Chair	June 2025
9. Develop a strategy for external fundraising to support cohort-building initiatives and/or graduate funding.	Designate a faculty member as the liaison with the FSS team as part of its annual service tasks and committee assignments.	Chair	August 2025
10. As the capacity to offer CO-OP expands, department/faculty should consider introducing a direct entry stream in CO-OP.	The department will work with the FSS team to assess the costs and benefits of an ECON 1-COOP stream and the FSS team's capacity to add on this stream.	Undergraduate chair	September 2025

Quality Assurance Committee Recommendation

McMaster's Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) reviewed the above documentation at the November 19, 2025, meeting. The committee recommends that the **Economic graduate and undergraduate** 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.

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Institutional Quality Assurance Program (IQAP) Review

Labour Studies (Graduate and Undergraduate programs)

Date of Review: March 17 – 18, 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 Labour Studies undergraduate and graduate programs. 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 School of Labour Studies submitted a self-study in January 2025 to the Acting 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 virtual site visit to McMaster University on March 17-18, 2025. The review included interviews with the Deputy Provost; Acting Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning and Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, Faculty Dean, Associate Deans of graduate and undergraduate studies, Director, School of Labour Studies, and meetings with groups of current students, full-time faculty and support staff.

The Director, School of Labour Studies 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 reviewers stated that an in-person site visit would have been preferable, although they also wrote that "the logistics of the virtual visit were flawless." The reviewers also highlighted a number of positive attributes of the program in the "Program Strengths" section. These include:

- The people in the program, "students, faculty, and staff," which reviewers identified the "greatest strength." The review praised the student body and the "quality of the faculty."
- Small size of the School of Labour Studies, which the review noted created a strong community and an excellent learning environment for the students.
- The School's strong and extensive ties to the community, particularly their success in educating non-traditional students both in the undergraduate and Certificate programs.
- The strength of their curriculum, especially regarding experiential leaning.

In the body of the report, the reviewers also highlighted the School's success in fulfilling the top priorities in McMaster's Strategic Plan. The reviews particularly highlight success in:

- Helping establish McMaster as a centre for top class research and scholarship (Priority #3), as evidenced by the faculty's record in research, publication, and funding, and the school's key role in growing associations such as the Canadian Association for Work and Labour Studies (CAWLS).
- Achieving "inclusive excellence" (Priority #1), with the reviewers especially praising how "the School has consistently embedded values of equity, diversity, and inclusion into its programming." The review also praised the high levels of achievement of the students in recent years.
- Engaging with the broader community (Priority #4), as already noted above.
- Pursuing "pedagogic innovation" (Priority #2), especially through the undergraduate program.
- The reviewers also praised the School's commitment to accessibility in all of its programs – BA, MA and PhD – as well as its provision of advance credit to students who successfully complete one of the certificate programs.

Opportunities for Improvement and Enhancement, including appropriateness of resources

The reviewers' report concurred with the broad challenges identified in the self-study. The School has stopped its decline in undergraduate enrolment and its numbers have been climbing again, but the this rebound must be maintained without losing the community and comfortable in-class experience that the students prize, and which has allowed them to thrive.

The most frequently noted problem in the review (as in the previous one) is the severe limits on faculty resources, which make it a challenge to grow and sustain the PHD program and to meet undergraduate students' desire for a broad range of subject offerings. In the section on resources, the reviewers state: "Th[e] level of faculty resources creates challenges for the unit, especially in the area of graduate supervision and PhD program delivery, in which only 2.75 faculty members are available to supervise PhD candidates. Limited faculty resources have also made previous recommendations calling for expanding the breadth of course offerings difficult to enact."

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

Recommendation #1: We encourage the School to leverage its already strong connections with off-campus organizations in order to enhance its recruitment at the undergraduate level. Potential connections between the non-degree certificates and the towards groups and organizations traditionally close to the School and its Faculty members. This would have to be done in coordination with the Faculty and the University's recruitment teams.
Department's Response and Actions to be Taken: We concur especially with the last part of the recommendation: the School should work with recruitment teams (which the faculty has been developing in recent years) to boost enrolment, bringing in community partners as well. Our certificate program is entirely online and most of the students are not local, so barring the creation of an online degree, recruiting large numbers into our undergraduate program will be a challenge.
Acting Dean's Response: The Faculty strongly supports the School's proposed plan to work collaboratively with both the Faculty recruitment team and the School's community partners to enhance recruitment into its undergraduate programming. Such recruitment should involve recruitment into Level I Social Sciences as well as into the School's degree programs in Level II. While recognising the challenges in recruiting students from the certificate program, the School is encouraged to look for other innovative ways to recruit students as it already does by offering students with a completed certificate one credit towards an undergraduate degree. For example, the Faculty is currently providing one credit towards an undergraduate degree for the completion of certain Specialist High Skills Major (SHSM) at Ontario high schools (https://futuresocsci.mcmaster.ca/specialist-high-skills-major-shsm/). There is opportunity for the School to explore the chosen SHSM majors for this credit option as well as engage in targeted advertising or activities to specific high schools hosting these majors in the local areas.

Recommendation #2: We encourage the School to put in place a regular assessment process of the Concurrent Certificate with Commerce and to consider similar initiatives with other units, whether inside or outside the Faculty of Social Sciences.
Department's Response and Actions to be Taken: We have been tracking the Concurrent Certificates informally, but creating a more thorough process will take time. In McMaster's administrative system, students do not register in such Concurrent Certificates; they claim them at the end of their degrees, and show they have completed the requirements. The first cohort that can claim this Certificate will complete their degrees in April 2026. Once we gather data on students who complete the Certificate, especially their home faculty or department, we will be able to assess progress more consistently.

Regarding collaborations with other departments and faculties, discussions have been taking place on the Faculty and University level encouraging greater collaboration and especially interdisciplinary development. The Director and undergraduate director will be engaged in these efforts.

Acting Dean's Response: The Faculty recognizes the challenges in determining the success of the Concurrent Certificate in Work and Labour Relations given the delay in learning who completes the course requirements for the concurrent certificate programs. Therefore, the School's approach is reasonable in terms of determining who is completing the certificate as one way of assessing the certificate program. The School might also want to assess how the certificate is currently being promoted to students in Social Sciences and Business and how it be being used as an undergraduate recruitment tool.

Recommendation #3:
We encourage the Faculty and University administrators to consider ways to facilitate interdisciplinary collaborations between units, in particular by reviewing the "bum in seats" funding model and by making joint projects easier between units affiliated with different Faculties. This would include providing units with the data necessary to the assessment of such initiatives.

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:
The School fully concurs with this recommendation for the Faculty and University administrators to act on this, especially given the concerns articulated in our response to R#2 regarding how to track the Concurrent Certificate.
We also agree that joint projects would be easier to create and sustain with a funding model that is less competitive and more collaborative.

Acting Dean's Response: The University is currently working on the course registration system to allow students to register for minors offered at the University. The Faculty has indicated its willingness to pilot registration in its minor programs (offered by the Vice-Provost, Teaching and Learning). The hope is that this could then be extended to allow for the registration in a concurrent certificate program. The Faculty highly values interdisciplinary programming. There are ways to support such initiatives within the current budget model and the Faculty is very willingly to work with the School to do so.

Recommendation #4:
We noted that the School has begun to reverse the enrollment decline in the 'gateway' first year courses. We recommend that these efforts to boost first year course enrollments continue, combined with support for greater promotion and awareness of program offerings among first-year students.

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:
The School has been revising and reshaping the Level 1 courses for many years (as the report notes) and we will be doing another review this year in light of the IQAP report and most recent enrolment trends.
We have expanded promotion of our courses on social media and other areas, and will explore new ways to make Level 1 students aware of our courses.

Acting Dean's Response: The School is to be commended for its work in reversing its enrollment trends. As noted in recommendation #1, the School is encouraged to work with the Faculty recruitment and communications team to support both Level I and Level II recruitment activities.

Recommendations #5 & #6 (combined because they speak to the same issue):

Recommendation #5: We recommend that the School explore ways to expand PhD supervision capacity. This could include granting supervision privileges to Teaching Professors.

Recommendation #6: We also recommend proactively engaging faculty from other units who already have PhD supervision privileges in Labour Studies when an application in their area of expertise is received, rather than limiting supervision considerations to current School faculty.

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:
The Teaching Professor was granted supervisory privileges in the Spring of 2025, not long after the IQAP cite visit.
Many Labour Studies faculty have been pursuing this goal, in fact some our most recent PhD graduates (whose defense occurred since the review) had committees in which the main supervisor was the only member of Labour Studies. The School has a policy that allows supervision by faculty outside SLS, although efforts to increase the extent of external participation will face challenges, since supervisory capacity in other departments is also stretched, and some of our adjunct faculty (Ian McKay, Steven McBride) just retired.

Acting Dean's Response: The School has expanded its own PhD supervisory capacity with the recent awarding of supervisory privileges to its Teaching Professor. The School could explore the possibility of adjunct appointments outside of the Faculty or McMaster as a way of further expanding its supervisory capacity.

Recommendation #7:
We recommend that the School continue to review and refresh course offerings. Review and update current elective offerings at cognate units. Review course content to limit unnecessary overlap. Review the strategic role of online course offerings. Leverage and expand experiential learning opportunities, particularly within the Master's curriculum, where they are currently almost absent compared to their strong presence at the undergraduate level.

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:
The School concurs that a review of the Undergraduate curriculum with an eye towards reducing overlap is a priority.
Last year, we began to review our offerings of electives, eliminating some that did not engage students; this review will continue.
Regarding online courses, expanding our online offerings, especially at Level 2, has been key to our rebound in enrolment; but students who major in our program have excelled in the in-person format and strongly prefer that we keep it. Our next step is to determine how to maintain this balance.
The school will continue to offer Co-op Options and a placement course, now a 3-Unit course with a greater focus on field experience.

Regarding the Masters' program: the School will conduct a review of existing experiential education (EE) opportunities in other programs, and consider whether offering an EE pathway (in addition to the MRP and thesis pathways) is viable, or how EE opportunities can be expanded in other ways.
Acting Dean's Response: The School is encouraged to continue its review of its elective course offerings as well as determine how it might expand its experiential education offerings with an eye to the impact on enrollments and on student experience.

Recommendation #8: We recommend leveraging the program's strengths with work placements and co-op with sufficient administrative supports to ensure the sustainability of these initiatives.
Department's Response and Actions to be Taken: Enrolment in our co-op program has not been what the School of Labour Studies had hoped (the enrolment for the upcoming 2025-6 year was especially poor). The School will work with Experiential Education on improving recruitment, and work with partners in the community to provide opportunities. The challenge is that most such partners lack the resources to provide paid positions; finding those resources will be one of the priorities of the School's part of McMaster's upcoming fundraising and development campaign. As noted in the response to #7, the School has changed the placement course to a 3-Unit offering in the winter, which should ensure its viability.
Acting Dean's Response: The low enrollment in the co-op program is disappointing for the School. With the recent hiring of a Director, Advancement – Humanities, Social Sciences & Campaign and the upcoming hire of an Associate Director, Advancement Social Sciences in the new year, the Faculty will be a good position to support the School's objective of fundraising for co-op opportunities with its community partners.

Recommendation #9: Based on inputs from graduate students and reflections by program faculty, we recommend a critical assessment of the viability of the unit level methods course. This may include current efforts to revise the course or seeking a more interdisciplinary option with other departments offering appropriate methods courses.
Department's Response and Actions to be Taken: Already completed. One of our faculty stepped up to take on this course and redesigned it completely. The new version is being offered in the Fall Term 2025.
Acting Dean's Response: The School should assess the revised course after its delivery to ensure it addresses the expressed concerns.

Recommendation #10:
The level of faculty resources (4.75 FTEs) presents significant challenges to graduate supervision in general and to the viability of the PhD program in particular. We recommend that the University and Faculty allow the School to regain at least the same number of FTEs that was deemed necessary when the PhD program was launched. Failing that, we recommend a critical review of the viability of the PhD program and that options be explored, including with other McMaster units, to expand the supervisory capacities of the program and guarantee course offerings.

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:
The School agrees whole-heartedly that 1) the current level of faculty resources creates major problems regarding graduate supervision and the future of the PhD program, and 2) that the School needs to reach the faculty complement that was considered essential when the PhD program was started. If the School does not get new faculty resources, then we agree that we will need to carefully review the PhD program, including exploring potential partnerships with other McMaster units.

Acting Dean's Response: Given the fiscal environment the Faculty is currently operating within, any commitments to new faculty-lines are likely to be very limited in next budget cycle. The School is encouraged (as noted above) to explore other ways to expand the supervisory capacities of the program, including exploring potential partnerships with other McMaster units.

Recommendations #11 & 14 – combined because they speak to very similar things:

Recommendation #11: Given physical space limitations, we recommend exploring shared undergraduate space for the Labour Studies Student Association. Partnering with a cognate unit, such as Sociology, would enhance efficiencies in space utilization and greater awareness of the Labour Studies program.

Recommendation #14: We recommend that the School continue to support the Labour Studies Student Association (LSSA)—including by securing financial support for its activities—and continues its efforts to build engagement and connections among graduate students, including by creating a space or an association specifically dedicated to them.

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:
As noted in the IQAP self-study, the LSSA has been remarkably active in recent years, doing well even through the pandemic, and thriving since. The School remains actively engaged with the LSSA, and will continue to support them in their efforts to connect with students and organize recruitment, social, and career-oriented events. In discussions with the LSSA leadership, funding problems did not seem a chief concern, although this may change with pending legislative changes by the Ontario government. In that event, we will work with the LSSA to ensure that they have sufficient funding. Regarding space, there are limited options in our building, and combining with a larger unit may not suit our students' strong attachment to our small community. However, there are rooms for student associations and department/program specific events in L.R. Wilson Hall (the Humanities and Social Sciences building) and the Hub, McMaster's new space specifically for undergraduate students, and we will help the LSSA take advantage of them.

Acting Dean's Response: The School is also encouraged to work with the Office of the Associate Dean, Undergraduate Studies to help provide support to the Labour Studies Student Association
Recommendation #12: We recommend that the School review and amend its by-laws to include formal representation of both undergraduate and graduate students on the School Council and any committees related to academic programs.
Department's Response and Actions to be Taken: The School generally agrees that more student involvement is our Council and related committees would be a good idea. The Director will consult with the LSSA about the possibility of undergraduate representatives sitting on the SLS council. There is not currently a student association for our graduate program, so we will need to explore ways to identify and recruit student representatives for the council, or to encourage the creation of a graduate student body. The School will also research how student representation is achieved in other departments and programs in Social Science and will look to follow best practices.
Acting Dean's Response: Determining best practices for the representation of undergraduate and graduate students in academic programming decision-making bodies is a reasonable course of action as is the School's plan to determine how such representation could be implemented.

Recommendation #13: We recommend that the School establish a formal and confidential system for complaints and suggestions, allowing students to express concerns directly to the School's leadership.
Department's Response and Actions to be Taken: The School currently has a number of avenues for students to raise concerns, and our small size tends to makes our leadership accessible to students. Nevertheless, the School will explore ways to ensure that students are aware of the ways available to express concerns. The School will also research existing practices at McMaster for creating confidential systems for complaint, at the same time making sure that any such system is consistent with McMaster policies.
Acting Dean's Response: As noted by the School, the Faculty/University already has a number of formal processes to handle student complaints, depending on the type of complaint. Raising awareness of these various processes is something the School could pursue. The Faculty does not support the development of any process that would contravene University policy. The student course evaluation system is a clear opportunity for students to provide suggestions directly the School's leadership and program exit surveys could similarly be run to gather suggestions for program improvements.

Recommendation #15: We recommend that the University and the Faculty of Social Science consider increasing the number of faculty members in the School or explore ways to better recognize and/or alleviate the administrative workload currently borne by the School's faculty.

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken: As noted re. Recommendation #10, the School fully concurs that the University and the Faculty of Social Science need to consider creating new positions in the School of Labour Studies. The reviewers are also correct that the limit size of our faculty complement creates serious administrative burdens on the School's existing faculty. With 4.75 FTEs, covering the key leadership positions (Director, Graduate Director, Undergraduate Director, plus managing our Certificate Programs, which combined have more than 200 non-degree students), is a perennial challenge. Moreover, the School's faculty is aware of the importance that we have a voice in key bodies in the Faculty of Social Sciences and indeed around the university. All this leaves the current faculty considerably overextended regarding service commitments.
Acting Dean's Response: The Faculty acknowledges and values the effort of the current faculty of the School of Labour Studies in administrating both the School and its undergraduate and graduate programming and in representing the School/Faculty across campus. The Faculty has been working with the School's leadership to try to ensure fair recognition of the service contributions of its faculty members through Cp/M, course releases for formal administrative roles and the recent memorandum of understanding between the Faculty and the School for the School's non-degree Certificate Programs.

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)
#1 - leverage LS's already strong connections with off-campus organizations in order to enhance its recruitment at the undergraduate level.	School of Labour Studies (SLS) will work with FSS's (gradually developing) recruitment teams to boost enrolment, bringing in community partners as well.	Director, undergraduate director	2025-6 Academic Year and going forward
#2 – create a regular assessment process of the Concurrent Certificate with Commerce and to consider similar initiatives with other units	Gather data on first cohort that can claim Concurrent Certificate Join Faculty and higher level plans for new collaborations	Director, undergraduate director Director, undergraduate director	Starting April 2026 Ongoing
#3 - the Faculty and University administrators to consider ways to facilitate interdisciplinary collaborations between units, in particular by reviewing the "bum in seats" funding model	SLS will encourage Faculty and University to take such actions	Director, University and Faculty leadership	2025-6 academic year and going forward
#4 - continue efforts to boost first year course enrollments, and greater promotion and awareness of program offerings among first-year students	SLS will continue rethinking first year courses expand promotion of our courses on social media and other areas	Director, Undergraduate Director, Social Media coordinator	2025-6 academic year and going forward
#5 & #6 – Expand PhD supervision capacity, by allowing Teaching Professors to supervise	Teaching Professor granted supervision privileges last year	Graduate Director	2025-6 academic year and going forward

and proactively engaging eligible faculty in other unis.	SLS will continue to actively engage those in other units re. supervision		
#7 – refresh course offerings, focusing on overlap, electives, on-line courses and experiential learning in the Masters	Review of offerings continues this year, especially regarding electives and curriculum overlap. Regarding Masters: SLS will explore how experiential education is pursued in other programs and how such as pathway can be created in our program.	Director, Undergraduate Director, Graduate Director	2025-6 academic year and going forward (a constant effort by our School)
#8 – leverage program strengths to ensure viability of placement and co-op	New 3-unit placement course created and should be viable; SLS will work with Experiential Education and fundraising and development to strengthen Co-op option	Director, Undergraduate Director	2025-6 academic year and going forward
#9 – critically assess methods course	New methods course being offering this Fall	Methods course instructor	Completed
#10 - that the University and Faculty allow the School to regain at least the same number of FTEs that was deemed necessary when the PhD program was launched; otherwise, review of the viability of the PhD program	SLS agrees entirely with need for new hiring to support PhD If these are not found, we will review the future of the PhD program.	Faculty of Social Science and University Leadership Graduate director, Director	2025-6 Academic Year and going forward until adequate faculty complement is achieved 2027-8 Academic Year
#11 and #14 – support the LSSA, particularly regarding funding and space	SLS will continue engagement with LSSA, which has been strong in recent years, helping with space and financial issues as needed.	Director, Undergraduate Director	2025-6 Academic Year and Going Forward
#12 – allow for formal student representation on the School	SLS will consult with LSSA about representation	Director, Undergraduate Director, Graduate Director	2025-6 Academic Year and Going Forward

Council and academic committees	SLS will consult with graduate students about finding representatives. SLS will explore how student representation is achieved in other Soc Sci programs.		
#13 - establish a system for students to express complaints and suggestions directly to the School's leadership	SLS already has many avenues for students to voice concerns. But SLS will research existing practices at McMaster for creating such systems as are consistent with McMaster policies	Director	2025-6 Academic Year and Going Forward
#15 - that the University and the Faculty of Social Science consider increasing the number of faculty members in the School or explore ways to better recognize and/or alleviate the administrative workload currently borne by the School's faculty.	SLS fully agrees and will continue to advocate for new positions to relieve the administrative burdens on current faculty members.	Director, all faculty	2025-6 Academic Year and going forward until adequate faculty complement is achieved.

Quality Assurance Committee Recommendation

McMaster's Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) reviewed the above documentation at the March 19, 2026, meeting. The committee recommends that the **Labour Studies graduate and undergraduate** programs 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.

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Institutional Quality Assurance Program (IQAP) Review

Philosophy (Graduate and Undergraduate programs)

Date of Review: February 25th and 26th, 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 Philosophy undergraduate and graduate programs. 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 Philosophy department submitted a self-study report for the undergraduate and graduate programs in December 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 Humanities, 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 virtual site visit to McMaster University on February 25th and 26th, 2025. The review included interviews with the Deputy Provost, Acting Vice-Provost Teaching and Learning and Vice-Provost and Dean of Graduate Studies, Faculty Dean, Associate Deans of graduate and undergraduate studies, Chair of the department, and meetings with groups of current students, full-time faculty and support staff.

The Chair of the Philosophy department along with the Chair of Graduate Studies and the Chair of Undergraduate Studies submitted responses to the Reviewers' Report (March 2025). Specific recommendations were discussed and clarifications and corrections were presented. Follow-up actions and timelines were included.

Strengths

"The department's faculty are productive researchers who are consistently publishing their work in high-visibility venues and attracting a considerable amount of external funding support.

The undergraduate program teaches a high volume of students […] while maintaining a very high standard of excellence, including the very successful and competitive JPPL program and a high quality Philosophy BA Honours program […]

The graduate program prepares its students to discover, create, and communicate knowledge in an innovative and inclusive way, as is evidenced by its success in placing its MA students in competitive PhD and law programs, and its PhD students in academic and professional positions.

The department is doing an excellent job of promoting equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility, both through its program design and through its hiring decisions.

The department houses a truly impressive range of programs, including The Bertrand Russell Research Centre, The/La Collaborative, and the Institute on Ethics and Policy for Innovation. These programs generate exciting, engaged scholarship and provide students with opportunities to expand their philosophical training and gain practical experience in applied research contexts.

The department has created a strong sense of community and collegiality among faculty, staff, and students that supports and sustains its work on all these fronts."

Opportunities for Improvement and Enhancement, including appropriateness of resources

Undergraduate:

The review team comment positively on the sustained success and popularity of the JPPL Program. They also comment on the effectiveness of the Philosophy B.A. Program in delivering high-quality teaching and in introducing popular new courses. However, they identify some opportunities for improvement and enhancement in the Philosophy B.A. program, especially relating to the weaker sense of belonging and cohort among these students compared to JPPL. They made several concrete suggestions relating to this, which are listed below.

Graduate:

The review team comment positively on the success of the Department's two-year MA Program. They note its distinctiveness and suggest "reinforcing its strengths in the recruitment and development of graduate students." They also suggest reviewing the purpose of the MA thesis as currently structured and exploring permitting alternate thesis formats, which may be more useful for particular kinds of students, including those applying to PhD Programs.

The review team also comment positively on the Philosophy PhD Program. Nevertheless, they note that there are challenges relating to time and rate of completion. They suggest the Philosophy PhD program could be enhanced by finding "an opportunity in the first year of the PhD program to give students formal and structured guidance on preparing for the Qualifying Exam," with a view to promoting timely completion.

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

Recommendation #1: *Increase the Department's permanent faculty complement to ensure it can continue to offer its high quality undergraduate programs to the remarkably high volume of students that it teaches.* Review team comments in the report related to this recommendation: • "If the faculty complement increases, we recommend revisiting previous suggestions for changes to the undergraduate program, including increasing the size of the JPPL cohort."
Department's Response and Actions to be Taken: • The Department will consult with leadership on this recommendation.
Dean's Response: • There are many needs in the Faculty. Balancing these needs is challenging. One opportunity that may come up again in the future is the possibility of a permanent teaching professor in the Dept of Philosophy. I encourage my colleagues to be open to such an opportunity if it arises. It may not be net new resources as the CLAs are time-limited, but it could bring more permanent relief. • Beyond that, I am always looking for ways to add faculty, though that is difficult with a multi-million dollar structural deficit within the Faculty.

Recommendation #2: *Build on current efforts to enhance the degree to which the students in Philosophy BA programs understand themselves to be engaged in a common enterprise with a cohort of peers.* Review team comments in the report related specifically to this recommendation: • Suggestions: (a) "Restrict enrollment in certain tutorials of required courses to philosophy majors"; (b) "Specify curricular concentrations within the Honours major or otherwise articulating to students a unifying framework for their coursework"; (c) "Revive or strengthen efforts to institute a peer mentoring program within the Honours majors."
Department's Response and Actions to be Taken: • We support this goal and thank the reviewers for their concrete suggestions • In response to the three specific suggestions: 1. It may not be feasible to restrict enrollment in certain tutorials to Philosophy majors – either administratively or given student schedules. But we will investigate this – and the option of nominating certain tutorials in core courses as *chiefly* for Philosophy majors. We will also explore other ways of carving out classroom time for Philosophy BA students specifically, to help build a sense of shared purpose and cohort, with the goal of enhancing student experience and aiding retention. 2. We are interested in the idea of specifying curricular concentrations within the Philosophy Honours major. This is something we will explore. We will also discuss at

the department level the reviewers' suggestion that faculty try to "formulate a collective sense of what binds the content covered in the curriculum together and then explicitly convey that to students in a number of their classes."

3. We will investigate the possibility of recreating something like the existing (student run and organized) peer mentorship program in JPPL for Philosophy Honours students. This has been very successful in JPPL, so we have a good model to follow.

- On the advice of the MacPherson Institute (MI), we will apply for funding to employ an undergraduate Philosophy student as a "Student Curriculum Consultant." If appointed, the SCC will work with the MI and the department to collect feedback from current students on ways of addressing the goal of enhancing the degree to which the students in Philosophy BA programs understand themselves to be engaged in a common enterprise with a cohort of peers, including (but not necessarily limited to) the reviewers' specific suggestions.

Dean's Response:

- The dean's office supports efforts to increase cohesion and identity within the Hon Philosophy program: peer mentoring, increased social engagement and the like are welcome. We also think there could be efforts to connect the two student cohorts (Hon Phil and JPPL) on some shared activities, while retaining their own program identities.
- Looking at the Hon Phil curriculum periodically to ensure a sense of cohesion makes sense, and involving student voices via MacPherson funding could be fruitful in that work.
- We are not able to support measures that restrict flexibility for students (those within the Hon Phil and those outside of it) by running majors-only tutorials.
- As for curricular concentrations within the Hon Phil major, some thought can be given to this idea, but we would caution against proposals that require students to choose certain pathways or that require the department to offer individual courses more regularly than their faculty complement allows.

Recommendation #3:
Investigate the feasibility of offering an Applied Ethics and Policy certificate at the graduate level.

Review team comments in the report related to this recommendation:

- "The philosophy department might explore possibilities for becoming more deeply integrated into McMaster's strong STEM programs at the graduate level. The department's new clinical ethics internship program is an excellent step in this direction. Another possibility to explore is the development of curricular programs that give students in the health sciences and engineering the opportunity to take a number of classes in ethics and/or political philosophy that are relevant to occupations in these sectors and thereby earn a credential that certifies their resulting competence. In particular, McMaster is known for its practical commitment to ethically guided health science; programs exposing students to philosophical analyses of the moral and political values relevant to the health sciences could provide them with a theoretical foundation that informs, supports, and deepens their commitments. And a credential would allow students to signal the importance of these commitments to those outside the university. The department has already developed such a program at the undergraduate level – the Certificate in Applied Ethics and Policy. It is worth investigating the feasibility of offering a similar program at the graduate level."

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:

- The Department sees promise in the idea of developing graduate certificates, whether on its own or in collaboration with other programs, to help utilize existing graduate courses to attract new students and to build relationships across campus.
- We are unsure whether Philosophy has the faculty resources at present to support a graduate certificate in "Applied Ethics and Policy" (mentioned as an example by the review team). We note that only one tenure-stream faculty member in the Department (Ariella Binik) regularly teaches graduate courses in applied ethics. Claudia Emerson, who also works prominently in this area, does not teach any courses (undergrad or graduate), given the special nature of her research-heavy appointment. Nevertheless, we agree that some kind of graduate certificate in ethics and policy might appeal to students across campus, including in STEM fields. The Department will investigate this possibility, in coordination with Drs. Emerson and Binik, the Dean's Office, and potentially Prof. Lisa Schwartz in the Faculty of Health Sciences.

Dean's Response:

- We agree that a graduate certificate in applied ethics may be attractive. The draft policy under discussion would make a certificate credential possible with just two completed courses. If a course list of five or so courses (from across two or more units on campus) that are likely to be offered in any given year could be assembled this might be do-able (once the policy is approved). The new Heersink School of Global Health and Social Medicine might make a good partner, including Dr. Schwarz as noted. There could also be interested parties in the Faculty of Social Sciences, including within their new Masters of Public Policy degree.

Recommendation #4 ("Potential Area for Enhancement 1"):
Re-evaluate the two-year MA with an eye to reinforcing its strengths in the recruitment and development of graduate students.

Review team comments in the report related to this recommendation:

- "The McMaster MA in Philosophy is a two-year program, which is relatively unusual. Of the 14 Philosophy Departments in Canada that have doctoral programs, only four offer a two-year MA; the remaining 10 offer a one-year MA program. This difference can be a strength, and indeed both faculty members and students we met highlighted the value of the two-year program in preparing students for advanced graduate studies in Philosophy."
- "We encourage the Department to develop a clear articulation of the distinctive value of the two-year program, and to draw more heavily on the results in their recruitment efforts by, for instance, emphasizing the value of the two-year program in preparing students for admission to competitive PhD programs."

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:

- The Department supports the idea of better articulating and promoting the distinctive value of its two-year MA Program, with a view to recruitment.
- To advance this goal, the Department will review and adjust the way it promotes its MA program on its website, in its promotional materials (posters and flyers), and in discussions with prospective students before and during graduate recruitment season.

Dean's Response:

- The external review team reported to me that a one-yr MA is the standard in Philosophy Departments in Canada. The numbers reported above bear that out. While I appreciates there may be strengths in a two-yr MA program, I can imagine there are also advantages to a one-yr program. In my mind, it's not surprising that students who have selected a strong two-yr degree would speak highly of their decision. The same goes for faculty members who teach in a successful 2-yr MA program. I am confident it is an excellent program. But I wonder a) whether our pool of applicants would be deeper if we had a one-yr program; b) whether a student completing both an MA and PhD would be able to finish more quickly and with less financial burden and stress related to a longer period of being a FT student; and c) whether the department's faculty resources that currently support a second yr of the MA could be better leveraged by moving to a one-yr MA. What more could be done at the PhD level or with the ug majors (or certificates etc), if we freed up some resources currently invested in the two-yr MA? I don't know the answers to these questions, but I feel they are worth consideration/investigation.
- That said, I also agree that we should do what we can to highlight the programs we have in the most effective way. I support the plans noted above in that respect.

Recommendation #5 (listed as "Potential Area for Enhancement 2"):
Find an opportunity in the first year of the PhD program to give students formal and structured guidance on preparing for the Qualifying Exam.

Review team comments in the report related specifically to this recommendation:

- "The current program structure leaves a gap between the completion of courses in first year (end of April) and the beginning of the PhD seminar in second year (early September) in which students have not yet been given formal and structured guidance on writing their QE. If students were prepared earlier to begin work on their QE, they could make better use of that time, which may improve time-to-completion rates."
- "We recognize that previous external reviews have recommended changes to the PhD seminar, and that its current form is in response to some of those recommendations. This recommendation is not to scrap or heavily modify the existing PhD seminar, which appears to function well. Instead, it's to consider how to deliver one element of the PhD seminar earlier in the program so that students can take better advantage of the Spring/ Summer term of their first year in the program."

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:

- The Department supports the goal of providing clearer guidance to students in year 1 of the PhD program on the format and expectations of the thesis proposal and Qualifying Exam.
- We will investigate the best way of achieving this goal. The Department has already discussed moving the PhD Seminar to the first year of the program. This is still under discussion. Shifting the PhD Seminar to year 1 would make this goal easy to meet. If the PhD Seminar remains in year 2, this goal could be met in other ways, for instance:
    1. Build discussion of the format and expectations of the Qualifying Exam into each student's first annual supervisory committee meeting (this typically occurs in May). This would be relatively easy to implement in Philosophy, as the PhD Advisor / Graduate Chair routinely chairs all PhD supervisory committee meetings.

2. Create a repository of past successful Qualifying Exam documents and share with all first-year PhD students, to help them more easily understand what is expected.
3. Review and revise our instructions for the thesis proposal in our Graduate Handbook, for clarity. Ensure all PhD students have reviewed these by the end of year 1.
4. Require all PhD students to complete a preliminary two-page thesis proposal, with accompanying working bibliography, by the end of their first summer (September 1), to ensure they use the first summer productively and to help them get a head start on preparing for the QE.

- The Department will also review its existing PhD Seminar to ensure it is as useful for the graduate students as it can be, with a view to promoting timely program completion.

Dean's Response:

- The recommendation is a good one, and the dept's response seems reasonable. However, I worry a little about adding another requirement (No. 4 above). What happens if students do not finish that prelim proposal or are delayed? But I am sure the dept will come up with workable solutions.
- Another idea might be to offer a session/panel run by the grad advisor with grad supervisors and PhD 2s (and/or senior PhDs in the program) as panelists to offer tips, best practices, share perspectives on the challenges they faced etc. The expectations of the QE can be reiterated by supervisors and in the supervisory committee meeting following this session.

Recommendation #6:
Explore alternative options for the MA thesis format.

Review team comments in the report related to this recommendation:

- "The current expectation for the MA thesis is a 21,000 to 35,000-word thesis. While this format is indeed most appropriate for some students, it may not be ideal for all MA students. For instance, a second-year student who intends to apply to a PhD program to specialize in analytic philosophy might be better served by working on drafting and polishing a publishable article as part of their thesis requirement. We encourage the department to consider adjusting the MA requirements to allow alternative thesis formats."

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:

- The Department supports exploring alternative options for the MA thesis format, where this would make sense given each student's research goals and/or career aspirations
- The Department has already agreed to permit its PhD students to prepare "sandwich theses" – comprised of a set of publishable articles bookended with an introduction and conclusion – when this makes sense given the student's research and their career aspirations. We will investigate extending this "sandwich" option to MA students, in a scaled down way. We note that providing this option could help MA students planning to apply to PhD programs to prepare a writing sample in time for their applications, an issue highlighted by the reviewers.

Dean's Response:

- I support exploring alternative options for the MA thesis, including but not limited to the submission of a sandwich thesis.

Recommendation #7:
Consider finding ways to ensure that the Chair is not overburdened with tasks that might be handled by faculty members in other service roles

Review team comments in the report related to this recommendation:

- "In spite of the large number of service roles, it does appear that the current administrative structure of the Department puts a relatively heavy burden on the Chair relative to the Associate Chairs and others with service roles. The Department might consider finding ways to ensure that the Chair is not overburdened with tasks that might be handled by faculty members in other service roles."

Department's Response and Actions to be Taken:

- The Department will review the distribution of service work between the Chair and Associate Chairs / others with service roles to ensure the Chair is not overburdened

Dean's Response:

- The current chair has been an amazing leader the past four years. But when I compare the governance structure in Philosophy with those in comparable departments, I feel strongly that the chair in this department is asked to take on more time-consuming tasks and responsibility than their counterparts. There are serious downsides to putting so much on one person's shoulders:
  - The chair's own career progression can be slowed.
  - The idea of renewal is not likely to be attractive to a strong chair.
  - Other colleagues do not learn as much about the programs/dept procedures as they should, which hampers their own ability to contribute effectively when asked.
  - Succession planning for the chair role is more difficult.
  - If the chair is not strong, more can fall through the cracks.
  - Etc.

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)
Increase the Department's permanent faculty complement to ensure it can continue to offer its high-quality undergraduate programs to the remarkably high volume of students that it teaches.	The Department will consult with leadership on this recommendation.	Department Chair	By the end of August 2025
Build on current efforts to enhance the degree to which the students in Philosophy BA programs understand themselves to be engaged in a common enterprise with a cohort of peers.	In Fall 2025, we will solicit feedback from current students in the Philosophy BA programs about whether and how to implement various possible measures to enhance the degree to which they feel themselves to be engaged in a common enterprise with a cohort of peers. Measures considered will include (but need not be limited to) those suggested by the review team, discussed above.	Department Chair and Undergraduate Chair, with assistance from the undergraduate Student Curriculum Consultant (in Fall 2025), and in consultation with the other faculty in Philosophy (in Winter 2026).	By April 30, 2026

	We will apply for funding from the MacPherson Institute to employ a Student Curriculum Consultant in Fall 2025, who will help us gather this feedback. The department will meet to discuss implementation before the end of the Winter 2026 term.		
Investigate the feasibility of offering an Applied Ethics and Policy certificate at the graduate level.	In Fall 2025, the department will consult with its faculty working in ethics and applied ethics, faculty in FHS, and the Associate Dean (GSR), to discuss options for implementing a certificate that would create links to FHS at the graduate level. Discussions to take place ahead of the next graduate curriculum submission, due January 2026.	Department Chair and incoming Graduate Chair, in consultation with Associate Dean (GSR) and with faculty in FHS.	By January 31, 2026
Re-evaluate the two-year MA with an eye to reinforcing its strengths in the recruitment and development of graduate students.	The department will review how it presents and promotes the distinctive strengths of its MA program and will update its website and promotional materials ahead of the next graduate recruitment cycle.	Department Chair, MA Advisor, and incoming Graduate Chair	By November 1, 2025
Find an opportunity in the first year of the PhD program to give students formal and structured	The department will consider how best to achieve this in connection with a review of its	Department Chair and incoming Graduate Chair, in consultation	By January 31, 2026

guidance on preparing for the Qualifying Exam.	PhD Seminar. It will complete this review ahead of the next graduate curriculum submission, due January 2026 at the latest.	with the other faculty in Philosophy	
Explore alternative options for the MA thesis format.	The department will consider this recommendation in connection with a review of its graduate curriculum, to be completed ahead of the next graduate curriculum submission, due January 2026 at the latest.	Department Chair, MA Advisor, and incoming Graduate Chair, in consultation with the other faculty in Philosophy	By January 31, 2026
Consider finding ways to ensure that the Chair is not overburdened with tasks that might be handled by faculty members in other service roles	The department will consider this recommendation in Fall 2025. Among other things, it will create documents detailing the duties attached to each service role, to help other department officers work independently and to prevent everything going through the department chair.	Department Chair, faculty members in administrative roles (Undergrad Advisor, Grad Chair, MA Advisor; Department Manager), Department Manager	By May 2026, if not before

Quality Assurance Committee Recommendation

McMaster's Quality Assurance Committee (QAC) reviewed the above documentation at the January 22, 2026, meeting. The committee recommends that the **Philosophy 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 scheduled in seven years, and to be conducted no later than eight years after the start of the last review.

Office of the Registrar:

Undergraduate Curriculum Report – Dean's Permission List

to

Undergraduate Council

for the 2026 – 2027 Undergraduate Calendar

April 2026

Courses offered on Dean's permission as of April 13th, 2026

*Anything on this list that pre-dates September 1, 2025 will be removed by April 30th, 2026 if no response is received.

As of Date	Subject	Course	Title
9/1/2023	ABLD	2AE3	Introduction to Afro-Environmentalism
9/1/2023	ABLD	4BH3	Critical Issues in Black Communities and Health
9/1/2025	ANTHROP	2AR3	Digital Archaeology: From 3D-Modeling to the Metaverse
9/1/2021	ART	3DD3	3-Dimensional Challenges
9/1/2020	ART	3ET3	Explorations in Textiles Practices
9/1/2020	ART	3K03	Concentrated Study in 3D Rendering and Printing
9/1/2024	BIOLOGY	1AL0	Laboratory Skill Development
9/1/2024	BIOLOGY	3ST3	Special Topics in Ecology
9/1/2025	CHEM	2X03	Chemistry of Cosmetics
9/1/2024	CIVDEM	4EC6A	Partnered Learning in Elections and Democracy
9/1/2020	CMST	3CP3A	Communications Professionalization
9/1/2020	CMST	3CP3B	Communications Professionalization
9/1/2023	COMPSCI	3MR3	Mobile Robots and Autonomous Systems
9/1/2023	COMPSCI	4CG3	Computational Geometry
9/1/2021	COMPSCI	4QP3	Quantum Computing
9/1/2023	DATASCI	3VG3	Physics for Video Games
9/1/2025	EARTHSC	3S03	Sustainable Oceans
9/1/2024	ECON	3MP3	Applied Macroeconomic Policy
9/1/2024	ECON	4XX3	Honours Economics Analysis
9/1/2024	ECON	4Y03	Methods of Inquiry in Economics
9/1/2022	ENGINEER	3CW3	How to Change the World
9/1/2025	ENVSOCTY	3SJ3	Climate Change & Social Justice
9/1/2021	EXPLORE	4II3	The Beginning of Science: Ancient Egyptian and Babylonian Conceptions of Time and Space
9/1/2024	HTHSCI	3CA3	Cannabis: An Evidence-Based Understanding
9/1/2024	HTHSCI	3PM3	Psychedelics and Mental Health
9/1/2023	HTHSCI	4AO0	Senior Project Synthesis
9/1/2023	HTHSCI	4DD3	Senior Inquiry Project in Health Sciences
9/1/2025	HTHSCI	4RD3A	Integrated Statistics and Research Design
9/1/2025	HTHSCI	4RD3B	Integrated Statistics and Research Design
9/1/2023	HTHSCI	4XP0	Praxis Pathways 4: Synthesis
9/1/2022	HUMAN	1RF1	Undergraduate Educational Journey Reflections

9/1/2025	INDIGST	2HW3	We Are The Medicine: Indigenous Teachings in Health and Wellbeing
9/1/2021	INSPIRE	1AA1	University Success: Academic Skills
9/1/2022	INSPIRE	1BB1	University Success: Career Skills
9/1/2022	INSPIRE	1CC1	University Success: Healthy Student Habits
9/1/2022	INSPIRE	1DD1	University Success: Numeracy Skills
9/1/2022	INSPIRE	1EE1	University Success: Academic Writing Skills
9/1/2022	INSPIRE	1FF1	University Success: Financial Skills
9/1/2021	INSPIRE	1HR3	Personal Leadership for First-Year Students
9/1/2025	IRH	3EP3A	Experiential-Focused Practicum
9/1/2025	IRH	3EP3B	Experiential-Focused Practicum
9/1/2025	IRH	3EP3S	Experiential-Focused Practicum
9/1/2024	IYIP	1IY0	International Internship Preparation: Ghana and Liberia
9/1/2025	KINESIOL	2GG3	Health Psychology
9/1/2025	KINESIOL	2KC3	Kinesiology for the Curious
9/1/2023	KINESIOL	4AN3	Applied Neurophysiology
9/1/2023	LINGUIST	3WC3	Writing about Science
9/1/2025	MECHTRON	4RP3	Research Project
9/1/2025	PHARMAC	3A03	Introduction to Pharmacology
9/1/2025	POLISH	1Z03	Beginner's Polish I
9/1/2024	POLSCI	4EC6A	Partnered Learning in Elections and Democracy
9/1/2024	POLSCI	4EC6B	Partnered Learning in Elections and Democracy
9/1/2024	SCIENCE	1SA1A	Science Seminar Course
9/1/2024	SCIENCE	1SA1B	Science Seminar Course
9/1/2025	SCIENCE	1SA1S	Science Seminar Course
9/1/2024	SCIENCE	1SB1A	Science Research Volunteer
9/1/2024	SCIENCE	1SB1B	Science Research Volunteer
9/1/2024	SCIENCE	1SB1S	Science Research Volunteer
9/1/2024	SCIENCE	1SC1	Graduate Student Shadowing
9/1/2025	SCIENCE	2DL3	Design Your Science Career
9/1/2025	SCIENCE	2RI3	Research Innovation in Science (RIS) Startup Development
9/1/2024	SCIENCE	2SB1	Scientific Research Skills Workshop
9/1/2024	SCIENCE	2SC1	Scientific Research Skills Workshop
9/1/2024	SCIENCE	2SD1	Scientific Research Skills Workshop
9/1/2024	SCIENCE	2SE1	Scientific Research Skills Workshop
9/1/2024	SCIENCE	2SG1	Scientific Research Group
9/1/2025	SCIENCE	2XR3	External Research Challenge I
9/1/2025	SCIENCE	3RI3	Research Innovation in Science (RIS) Challenge

9/1/2025	SCIENCE	3XR3	External Research Challenge II
9/1/2025	SFWRENG	4RP3	Research Project
9/1/2025	SOCSCI	4SD1	Skill Development Project
9/1/2025	WILSON	4T03	Topics in Leadership and Civic Life
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