

SENATE QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

Cyclical Review of the undergraduate and graduate programs in European, Russian and Eurasian Studies Executive Summary and Final Assessment Report

This Executive Summary and Final Assessment Report of the cyclical review of Carleton's undergraduate and graduate programs in European, Russian and Eurasian Studies are provided pursuant to the provincial Quality Assurance Framework and Carleton's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP).

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The undergraduate and graduate programs in European, Russian and Eurasian Studies reside in the Institute of European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, a unit administered by the Faculty of Public Affairs.

As a consequence of the review, the programs were categorized by Carleton University's Senate Quality Assurance and Planning Committee (SQAPC) as being of good quality. (Carleton's IQAP 7.2.13-7.2.14).

The External Reviewers' report offered a very positive assessment of the programs. Within the context of this positive assessment, the report nonetheless made a number of recommendations for the continuing enhancement of the programs. These recommendations were productively addressed by the Director of the Institute of European, Russian and Eurasian Studies and the Dean of the Faculty of Public Affairs in responses to the External Reviewers' report and Implementation on Plan that was submitted to SQAPC on December 14th, 2023.

European, Russian, and Eurasian Studies (EURUS)
Unit Response to External Reviewers' Report & Implementation Plan
Programs Being Reviewed: Undergraduate and Graduate Programs

Note: This document is forwarded to Senate, the Quality Council and posted on the Vice- Provost's external website.

Introduction & General Comments

Please include any general comments regarding the External Reviewers' Report.

The external reviewers' report evaluates the quality of the EURUS undergraduate and graduate programs very positively, emphasizing that "Among comparable Canadian programs, EURUS is a clear national leader in terms of teaching, research, and outreach on Russia and the EU." (p. 4). We are encouraged by the positive nature of the report. We note that the report does not raise any fundamental concerns about the program's overall architecture, including its ability to help students reach the stated learning outcomes. The report does, however, highlight several constructive suggestions that deserve future attention, on which we wish to comment in this memo.

For each recommendation ***one*** of the following responses must be selected:

Agreed to unconditionally: used when the unit agrees to and is able to take action on the recommendation without further consultation with any other parties internal or external to the unit.

Agreed to if additional resources permit: used when the unit agrees with the recommendation, however action can only be taken if additional resources are made available. Units must describe the resources needed to implement the recommendation and provide an explanation demonstrating how they plan to obtain those resources. In these cases, discussions with the Deans will normally be required and therefore identified as an action item.

Agreed to in principle: used when the unit agrees with the recommendation, however action is dependent on something other than resources. Units must describe these dependencies and determine what actions, if any, will be taken.

Not agreed to: used when the unit does not agree with the recommendation and therefore will not be taking further action. A rationale must be provided to indicate why the unit does not agree (no action should be associated with this response).

Calendar Changes

If any of the action items you intend to implement will result in calendar changes, please describe what those changes will be. To submit a formal calendar change, please do so using the Courseleaf system.

Hiring

Where an action item requires additional hiring (faculty or staff) the owner should at minimum include the Dean of the faculty and member of the unit.

UNIT RESPONSE AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

Programs Being Reviewed: Undergraduate and Graduate Programs in European, Russian and Eurasian Studies

Prepared by (name/position/unit/date): Crina Viju/Director EURUS/June 25, 2023

External Reviewer Recommendation & Categorization	Unit Response (choose only one for each recommendation): 1- Agreed to unconditionally 2- Agreed to if additional resources permit (describe resources) 3- Agreed to in principle 4- Not agreed to Rationales are required for categories 2, 3 & 4	Action Item	Owner	Timeline	Will the action described require calendar changes? (Y or N)
<p>1. Update EURUS' strategic vision in light of current international events (opportunity)</p>	<p><i>Agreed to unconditionally.</i></p> <p>The reviewers noted that “EURUS can capitalize on its existing expertise by developing new courses in the field, organizing conferences, and providing policy advice to Canadian institutions” related to the war in Ukraine and the changing geopolitics of the region. We agree. Indeed, due to the timeline of this review, the Self Study did not include a detailed description of the Institute’s responses to the Russian invasion of Ukraine. The following measures defined our leadership in the area and our strategic vision:</p> <p>- keep the community informed: EURUS organized outreach events related to the war in Ukraine with academics, diplomats and policy makers targeting different audiences (students, Carleton community more generally, policy makers and the public); increased our presence on social media; expanded and enhanced the War in Ukraine Observatory (With the financial support from various projects funded by</p>	<p>- EURUS will continue to respond to current international events through organizing public and government outreach events, and supporting faculty research and teaching.</p>	<p><i>EURUS</i></p>	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>

	<p>Erasmus+ Programme of the European Union and from the Faculty of Public Affairs, EURUS launched a new web portal, War in Ukraine Observatory, with the main goal of promoting an informed Canadian understanding of the war and its implications (https://carleton.ca/eurus/warinukraineobservatory/).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - engage students in faculty research projects: most of the EURUS faculty members were successful in grant applications from SSHRC and European Commission on research topics related to the implications of the War (Paul Goode, Jeff Sahadeo, Crina Viju). - educate new generation of students: EURUS offered new courses related to the current regional situation and its global implications; added content related to the current situation to most other courses; and offered at least one course per year in an online format so that it is accessible by students from outside Ottawa. - continue involving the EURUS-hosted scholars at risk from the region in events/teaching. 				
<p>2. Reorient student travel towards other countries of the region (opportunity)</p>	<p><i>Agreed to unconditionally.</i></p> <p>We have already made efforts to move in this direction by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - supporting our students' travel to Central and Eastern Europe, Central Asia and Caucuses for research and language training purposes. In the summer of 2023 already, several of our MA 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - EURUS will continue to support our students' travel to the region, search for new funding sources, such as Mitacs funding as well as European Commission travel grants (through Erasmus + Mobility programmes – please see below) to partly support our students' travel. Additionally, launch a fundraising campaign by contacting private companies and NGOs 	<p><i>EURUS</i></p>	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>

	<p>students are traveling to Czech Republic, Kyrgyzstan, Kazakhstan, and Georgia.</p> <p>- negotiating various MoUs for academic exchanges and research with different universities from the region.</p>	that need regional expertise and language skills.			
<p>3. Ad hoc nature of some arrangements crucial for the program's continuation</p> <p>To address this problem, EURUS may want to reconsider the way it deploys contract instructors. Another possibility is to factor in the program balance in the new hires. (weakness)</p>	<p><i>Not agreed to.</i></p> <p>We don't agree with this reflection, and we would like to point out that all interdisciplinary programs are facing similar issues. However, EURUS maintains strong relationships with all associated departments. We are comfortable with the structure of direct, usually informal, contacts with units as well as the more formal meetings in the Management Committee. The Deans and Associate Deans of the Faculty of Public Affairs and the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences have both offered support for EURUS when we see needs arising that can be met with the assistance of other units or in their own offices. The existing structure works well to fit our needs, including the cross-listing of courses.</p> <p>We do not envision new hires in EURUS in the short/medium term due to lack of resources. However, we do not agree that there has been an imbalance between the number of courses offered on Russia and the EU. Contract instructors were hired to teach courses that otherwise were taught by full-time faculty on administrative leaves. In our communication with the students, we will be careful to outline which courses are related to a specific sub-region if the titles are not self-explanatory (for example, a course focused</p>	n/a	n/a	n/a	N

	<p>on the war in Ukraine is relevant to both specializations, Russia/Eurasia and Europe/EU).</p>				
<p>4. Language instruction</p> <p>The study of the Russian language, which is crucial for MA students, and particularly those coming from universities not offering Russian, has been farmed out to a tutor working outside of the university structure. Students indicated to the external reviewers that they would have much preferred a for-credit graduate-level university course, perhaps a course in Russian taught in English for reading knowledge (“Russian for Reading Knowledge”), as offered at other universities. There are other possible configurations for solving this problem, which seems to have persisted since before the previous review. (weakness)</p>	<p><i>Agreed to if additional resources permit.</i></p> <p>We agree with the reviewers that Russian language instruction at Carleton is currently not sufficient to meet the needs of the EURUS MA, even though we recognize the efforts of the School of Linguistics and Language Studies to provide the best possible services within their limited resources. EURUS has taken steps since the last review to mitigate this.</p> <p>In 2021, due to another Summer without opportunities for immersion training in the region, we employed two teaching assistants (through the Kinross Fund and the FPA Dean’s office) to give 1-on-1 or small group intensive training sessions to our graduate students. In light of recent regional events, the tutoring program continues with funds provided by the FPA Dean’s office. Since Fall 2020, we assigned a dedicated RA (a native speaker) attached to EURUS specifically to help with Russian language training.</p> <p>In addition, we prepare a spreadsheet of all existing language programs in Russia/Eurasia and hold a meeting in January for all students who still need to acquire Russian to discuss training possibilities in the region and introduce them to other students who have recently returned from such programs.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director will initiate discussions with School of Linguistics and Language Studies and the Deans of FPA and FASS about an appropriate cost-sharing model to secure the provision of 4000-level Russian language instruction. - Director will discuss with Dean of FPA continued support of our tutoring program; - Director will continue to pursue external funding opportunities for students to acquire Russian language training in the region. (We are in the process of negotiating several Erasmus+ Mobility agreements with universities from the European Union (Rome III (Italy), Babes-Bolyai (Romania), Latvia, which (if approved) will provide funding to students to travel to these universities for exchanges, research, and language training. All the above universities provide Russian language courses at different levels of instruction.) - Support students in applying for Mitacs funding to travel to the region for language training in parallel to research. 	<p><i>EURUS Director Dean, FPA</i></p>	<p><i>Fall 2023 and ongoing</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>

	Offering a graduate-level university course is not feasible as the enrollment will be very small given that students are at different levels of language skills.				
5. Student research travel Russia’s war on Ukraine has limited opportunities for student travel to these two countries, as well as Russia’s ally, Belarus. Although such trips were not undertaken for language study per se, they also served as an opportunity for students to improve their Russian. EURUS has no control over when such travel will become available again. (weakness)	<i>Agreed to unconditionally</i>	<i>Please see number 2 above.</i>	<i>EURUS</i>	<i>Ongoing</i>	<i>N</i>
6. Determine the optimal size of the undergraduate programs in European and Russian Studies	<i>Agreed to in principle</i> We agree in principle with this evaluation, but we have had a difficult time determining the optimal size of the undergrad programs. BA numbers remain modest, even when taking into account the associated BGIInS specialization and stream.	- Director will research similar programs across North America and make inquiries about their size - Director will initiate a discussion with Associate Dean (Students and Enrolment), EURUS BA supervisor and EURUS BA administrator on the optimal size of the program given its regional focus and EURUS resources.	<i>EURUS Director</i>	<i>2024-2025</i>	<i>N</i>
7. Create a more cohesive undergraduate cohort of 1st and 2nd year students	<i>Agreed to unconditionally</i> This is a goal that we have worked towards for many years with mixed results. EURUS hosts a wide array of academic events, including lectures, conferences, and workshops. In addition, the Centre for European Studies also hosts events that are of interest to EURUS students. EURUS	- EURUS will organize a “welcome back” event for all students that will include presentations by students who have returned from academic exchanges or by 3rd and 4th year students on language training or university courses. This will	<i>EURUS</i>	<i>Fall 2023 and ongoing</i>	<i>N</i>

	<p>also has been hosting career development nights with presentations by EURUS alumni to help students bridge the gap between university and work life. All these events are organized mainly for our students (undergraduate and graduate). One issue that has been raised in the previous review was the low attendance of BAs at these events. Part of the issue is that EURUS social events have often been oriented towards or dominated by the MA students. BA students have expressed the desire for more events that are BA specific. That being said, our attempts to gather BAs for social events so far have not proven effective. We have had more success in integrating external presentations into the core courses for the BAs.</p>	<p>allow more contact between students in different years of the program.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Director will encourage 3rd and 4th year students to revive the EURUS BA student society. - Director will work with the student society to increase the number of events oriented towards BA students or increase the attendance of BAs at other EURUS events. - The Institute will encourage the undergraduate students to use the EURUS lounge space for study sessions as well as for social gatherings. 			
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