

**CARLETON UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON  
QUALITY ASSURANCE  
Cyclical Review of the undergraduate programs  
in Humanities  
Executive Summary and Final Assessment Report**

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

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The undergraduate programs in Humanities reside in the College of Humanities, a unit administered by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences.

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 College of Humanities and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in responses to the External Reviewers' report and Implementation on Plan that was submitted to SQAPC on September 28<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

**Humanities**  
**Unit Response to External Reviewers' Report & Implementation Plan**  
**Programs Being Reviewed: Undergraduate Program**

**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 BHum program was pleased to receive the Reviewers' very positive External Reviewers' report. This report was shared with our faculty, who had a chance to read it carefully, discuss it over email and in person, and formulate this response. This document contains both a response to the External Reviewers' Report and an Implementation Plan (Section B).*

*We wish to draw attention to three points. First, It is important to note the disappointment expressed by the externals in the decision taken by the university to conduct these reviews on-line. In their words, the arrangement presented significant disadvantages that prevented them from conducting the review in the way they felt it should have been done. The report asks the pointed question, 'How can a reviewer form a reliable impression of a program to which direct human contact is central without spending a couple of days fully immersed in its life and meeting the community's members face to face in both formal and less formal (e.g. over coffee or lunch) settings?' The obvious answer is that one cannot, and we would encourage the university to consider this in planning future reviews. We share the reviewers' disappointment in the arrangement. The knowledge that the University of Ottawa conducted its reviews in person this year makes the on-line arrangement at Carleton appear unjustifiable.*

*Second, it is worth pointing out that 10 of the 24 recommendations made by the reviewers require action by the university rather than by our program. So long as the university fails over years to provide the resources the program asks for and which the reviewers repeatedly identify as necessary, the external review serves to illustrate how growth and improvements to the program are hindered by the institution rather than by the program. The fact that this process involves no appeal for programs to the university when the latter ignores recommendations requiring its action calls into question the usefulness of much of this exercise, the program review, for the program itself.*

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 programs in Humanities

Prepared by (name/position/unit/date): College of the Humanities faculty

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)
1a. Promote awareness of humanities in general and of B.Hum in particular. (This is a task for the University rather than B.Hum.) <b>Opportunity.</b>	<i>Agreed to in principle. The program is already highly engaged in promoting itself. As noted by the reviewers, this is a task for the University rather than the department.</i>	<i>The university should increase its efforts to promote awareness of humanities in general and of B.Hum program in particular. “...both the University’s recruiters and those who produce its promotional materials need to make it easier for students to find the Humanities program and match it to their own interests and preferences. For this to work well, B.Hum needs to be promoted individually, not just as part of a broader Carleton package. In profiles of successful graduates, e.g. on billboards or city buses (an example mentioned to us), the B.Hum degree should be emphasized, not just the affiliation with Carleton as a university. The University should not be afraid to advertise directly a program as distinctive and highly successful as B.Hum, especially when it remains insufficiently known.”</i>	<i>Primarily ODFASS, and Recruitment, secondarily COH. The COH will request that ODFASS and Recruitment develop some initiatives to promote the College individually, in keeping with the externals’ recommendations.</i>	<i>Ongoing.</i>	<i>N</i>

<p>1b. Produce a new short video to serve as main hook for potential applicants instead of “Bachelor of Humanities Overview,” which fulfils a different function. <b>Concern and opportunity.</b></p>	<p><i>Agreed to if additional resources permit. Additional resources means adequate funds for producing a high quality video for the website.</i></p>	<p><i>The program will request funds from ODFASS to produce a new short video that will serve as main hook for potential applicants.</i></p>	<p><i>Primarily COH, secondarily ODFASS.</i></p>	<p><i>Preferably before 2023-4 recruitment season.</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>
<p>1c. Update regularly the online “Alumni profiles,” making sure to include recent graduates. <b>Opportunity.</b></p>	<p><i>Agreed to unconditionally.</i></p>	<p><i>The program will update regularly the online “Alumni profiles,” making sure to include recent graduates and enlisting the alumni association for help.</i></p>	<p><i>COH.</i></p>	<p><i>Ongoing.</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>
<p>1d. In promotional materials, keep highlighting the availability of financial aid. <b>Opportunity.</b></p>	<p><i>Agreed to in principle. We understand this recommendation to be aimed at the Recruitment Office, since most of the university promotional material is not produced by the program.</i></p>	<p><i>In promotional materials, the availability of financial aid should continue to be promoted.</i></p>	<p><i>Primarily University Recruitment, secondarily COH. The College will speak with Recruitment and request that promotional material continue to promote financial aid.</i></p>	<p><i>Initially summer 2023, and ongoing.</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>
<p>1e. Make the program more visible to international applicants. <b>Opportunity.</b></p>	<p><i>Agreed to in principle. This recommendation is unhelpfully vague and offers no specific advice other than to work with the university recruiters.</i></p>	<p><i>The program will speak with University Recruitment and Carleton International about making the program more visible and more appealing to international applicants.</i></p>	<p><i>COH.</i></p>	<p><i>Initially summer 2023, and ongoing.</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>

<p>1f. Look for ways further to personalize the application process, but without overburdening faculty. <b>Opportunity.</b></p>	<p><i>Not agreed to. The program feels strongly that the recommended interviews are not a good idea. The externals may not have had time during its interviews to appreciate the extent to which we already personalize the application process. The program already encourages and hosts visits, writes and makes calls to potential students, conducts personalized tours of the College, and invites prospective students to our discussion groups, among other things.</i></p> <p><i>In the early days of the College all applicants used to submit a portfolio with application, but we were eventually forced to drop this bit of personalization by the University.</i></p>	<p><i>No action required.</i></p>	<p><i>N/A</i></p>	<p><i>N/A</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>
<p>2a. Explore the possibility of making a few internships available to B.Hum students, as an added opportunity, not as part of a structured co-op program. <b>Opportunity.</b></p>	<p><i>Not agreed to.</i></p> <p><i>a) Most of our students already have the opportunity to do an internship or co-op through, for example, the Journalism or Biology streams of their combined degrees; b) The administrative resources required to establish and run a set of internships is too great. Establishing a program would require, we suggest, a 0.5 credit course release for a faculty member or an administrative hire for the equivalent number of hours. A faculty course release, however, would remove full-time faculty from the College core courses, which is not advisable; c) When the College was established in 1996 it did in fact run an internship program, but this only lasted a few years since it was unsuccessful in obtaining meaningful placements for students, largely for reasons that have to do with the nature of the program as a non-applied area of study. Those conditions persist today.</i></p>	<p><i>No action required.</i></p>	<p><i>N/A</i></p>	<p><i>N/A</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>

<p>2b. Revive the Professional Mentorship program. <b>Opportunity.</b></p>	<p><i>Not agreed to. Contrary to the reviewer's recommendation, the mentorship program was operational this year, although it was severely hampered by the fact that the program is understaffed.</i></p> <p><i>It is understandable that they missed this, given that the meetings during their 'visit' were online and short. If they had been able to meet with more than 5 students, or if the meetings had been scheduled so that they met with faculty after students, they might have gotten a clearer picture of the College.</i></p> <p><i>We note that all undertakings like a mentorship program require the dedication of faculty time, a scarce resource. It may be that the reviewers did not understand (and it is also probably the case that the University does not realize) that the College is seriously understaffed. Since the reviewers remarked that they were only able to meet 5 faculty members, we must point out that there are in fact only 3 faculty members teaching full-time in the B.Hum. 4 others are cross appointed, with only half of their teaching in the B.Hum, and 3 teaching faculty are now retired. Additionally, the College regularly relies on CIs or borrowed faculty for at least 8 of its mandatory courses.</i></p>	<p><i>No action required.</i></p>	<p><i>N/A</i></p>	<p><i>N/A</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>
<p>2c. Improve communication with Biology and Journalism in advising students in the two specialized combined options. <b>Opportunity.</b></p>	<p><i>Agreed to in principle.</i></p>	<p><i>The College will introduce 'mandatory' advising appointments for first and third year students in BJ-BHum and Bio-Hum degrees.</i></p>	<p><i>COH</i></p>	<p><i>Immediate.</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>

<p>2d. Work with the Registrar to make it easier for students to switch discussion groups halfway, but do not rush to split full-year courses into two. <b>Opportunity and concern.</b></p>	<p><i>Agreed to in principle. Thus far the Registrar has not been willing to agree to this accommodation for students, but we are still in discussion with them. We are committed to retaining the full-year core courses.</i></p>	<p><i>We will continue to consult with registrar about the possibility.</i></p>	<p><i>COH.</i></p>	<p><i>Ongoing.</i></p>	<p><i>Unknown.</i></p>
<p>2e. If staffing allows, consider reducing the size of discussion groups. <b>Opportunity.</b></p>	<p><i>Agreed to if additional resources permit. Currently resources do not allow this. It should be noted that discussion groups were in fact smaller (capped at 17 students) when the College was first created until a former Dean of FASS raised the enrollment levels in the early 2000s.</i></p>	<p><i>The program will request resources from ODFASS to reduce the size of discussion groups.</i></p>	<p><i>COH.</i></p>	<p><i>Ongoing.</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>
<p>2f. Establish a curated lending library of core books. <b>Opportunity.</b></p>	<p><i>Agreed to if additional resources permit.</i></p>	<p><i>The program will discuss the feasibility of establishing a lending library at our summer program retreat.</i></p>	<p><i>COH</i></p>	<p><i>Ongoing, beginning summer 2023.</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>
<p>2g. Improve coordination among faculty to avoid gaps and excessive overlap in coverage. <b>Opportunity.</b></p>	<p><i>Agreed to in principle. The externals' comments indicate that this recommendation follows from their meeting with students. Again, we must emphasize that it would be better if recommendations were not made based on a discussion with 5 students from the program, especially if the externals did not have an opportunity to meet with the program director or faculty after meeting with students.</i></p> <p><i>The program faced a unique personnel problem this year that undoubtedly led to this suggestion, but we were aware of it and it has already been addressed.</i></p>	<p><i>The program will consider whether to make any further adjustments to the curriculum and to consider whether particular areas need (better) coverage or whether there is unnecessary overlapping. It will also consider whether better coordination is needed among instructors and, if so, how to implement it.</i></p>	<p><i>COH</i></p>	<p><i>Curriculum meeting, summer 2023.</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>



<p>2h. Extend the “passport” requirement to all courses. <b>Opportunity.</b></p>	<p><i>Not agreed to. This system is really only suitable in core courses and may not work well or even be possible in all of the program’s courses. The program will, however, take the recommendation under consideration in its summer curriculum retreat.</i></p>	<p><i>The program will discuss the feasibility of extending the passport system to the core courses and other courses in the program.</i></p>	<p>COH</p>	<p>Summer 2023</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>2i. Prepare students more carefully for third-year research papers. <b>Opportunity.</b></p>	<p><i>Agreed to unconditionally. The reviewers were apparently unaware that we have in fact added a course parallel to HUMS 1200 (i.e., HUMS 1300) to address this problem (p. 8, 2i, “While we realize that adding a course parallel to HUMS 1200 to address the problem is not an option, perhaps the problem might be addressed more informally.”) Also, HUMS 2700 requires a research paper.</i></p>	<p><i>No action required.</i></p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p><i>N, the necessary calendar changes have already been made.</i></p>
<p>3. Do not rush to broaden and diversify the curriculum without very careful consideration. <b>Possible concern.</b></p>	<p><i>Agreed to unconditionally. Please note that the College is already constantly broadening and diversifying its curriculum which, of course, we do only with careful consideration.</i></p>	<p><i>All curriculum diversification will continue to be duly considered.</i></p>	<p>COH</p>	<p>Ongoing.</p>	<p><i>N, but may lead to future calendar changes.</i></p>
<p>4a. Ensure that FT staffing is at least maintained, if not improved. (This is another task for the University rather than the program.) Prepare for leadership succession within the program well ahead of time. <b>Concern.</b></p>	<p><i>Agreed to unconditionally. Contrary to what is implied by the reviewers’ comments, the College has already reached a state in which it relies mostly on faculty from other programs and recently retired faculty. We agree that we should prepare for leadership succession within the program well ahead of time.</i></p>	<p><i>A) COH will request that ODFASS develop a strategic plan to maintain and preferably improve FT staffing in the College. B) The Director will develop a leadership succession plan for the next Director of the College.</i></p>	<p><i>A) Primarily ODFASS, secondarily COH B) COH</i></p>	<p><i>A) Ongoing. B) Before the end of the current Director’s term in June 2027.</i></p>	<p>N</p>

<p>4b. Should renovations to the building which houses B.Hum be necessary, ensure that the program's temporary "home" fully meets its needs and requirements. <b>Concern.</b></p>	<p><i>Agreed to unconditionally, but such provisions can only be made by the university, not the program.</i></p>	<p><i>The university should plan ahead and consider an appropriate alternative space should the program temporarily have to move out of the building while renovations are taking place. The current space includes a student lounge, lecture theatre, a seminar room, and administrative offices.</i></p>	<p><i>Primarily ODFASS, secondarily COH. The program will request ODFASS to make appropriate plans</i></p>	<p><i>Fall 2023.</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>
<p>4c. Introduce literary analysis proper before the third year. <b>Concern and opportunity.</b></p>	<p><i>Not agreed to. This very brief recommendation is puzzlingly vague, since the program already introduces the analysis of literary works using tools specific to the discipline in the first year. In our opinion, no further action need be taken.</i></p>	<p><i>No action required.</i></p>	<p><i>N/A</i></p>	<p><i>N/A</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>
<p>4d. If possible, increase coverage of the 1000-1500 period. <b>Opportunity.</b></p>	<p><i>Not agreed to. It is difficult to know exactly which gaps ought to be covered since the student comments that this recommendation is apparently based on have not been shared with us. We already cover a number of authors and topics in this period (Dante, Boccaccio, Machiavelli, Aquinas, Maimonides, Chaucer) in our classes (HUMS 2000, 3000, 3200) and electives are available to the students if they want an explicitly historical perspective on this period.</i></p> <p><i>Again, the externals may have been better served by having their meeting with faculty scheduled after their meeting with students.</i></p>	<p><i>No action required.</i></p>	<p><i>N/A</i></p>	<p><i>N/A</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>

<p>4e. Maintain and promote support staff efficiency by making a flexible hybrid schedule available indefinitely. <b>Opportunity.</b></p>	<p><i>Not agreed to. There is no reason to think that the hybrid schedule is necessary to maintain or promote efficiency. To the contrary, the hybrid arrangement has led to certain inefficiencies in the office. A decision may be made to continue the flexible hybrid schedule, but the rationale for that decision will not include a recommendation from the externals made after their meeting with the support staff and without consultation with faculty or the director.</i></p>	<p><i>No action required.</i></p>	<p><i>N/A</i></p>	<p><i>N/A</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>
<p>4f. Look for ways to facilitate and speed up the training and integration of new administrative staff. <b>Opportunity.</b></p>	<p><i>Agreed to in principle. This criticism undoubtedly arose from a specific employment policy recently enforced by the university that produced a lengthy delay in a new staff appointment. On the other hand, a 'position notebook' is a welcome idea.</i></p>	<p><i>The College will develop 'position notebooks' for its three administrative positions.</i></p>	<p><i>COH</i></p>	<p><i>Summer 2023.</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>
<p>4g. Improve the handling of expense reimbursements. <b>Opportunity.</b></p>	<p><i>Agreed to in principle. The university expense reimbursement system is often considered cumbersome, time-consuming, unfriendly, and overly complex. It is controlled by the university and not the program.</i></p>	<p><i>The university should improve the expense reimbursement administrative process.</i></p>	<p><i>Primarily the University, secondarily COH. The program will share this opinion with the faculty Dean.</i></p>	<p><i>Fall 2023</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>
<p>4h. Maintain close ties with alumnae and alumni. <b>Opportunity.</b></p>	<p><i>Agreed to in principle. This is a task for the University rather than B.Hum. The full recommendation reads: "In line with 1a above, we recommend that the University assist the program with making better use of alumnae and alumni as a resource in recruitment, student mentoring, funding, etc."</i></p>	<p><i>The university should assist the program with making better use of alumni as a resource in recruitment, student mentoring, funding, etc.</i></p>	<p><i>COH will request assistance from alumni relations in its recruitment, mentoring and funding efforts.</i></p>	<p><i>Ongoing.</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>