

**CARLETON UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON  
QUALITY ASSURANCE**

**Cyclical Review of the Master's Program in Applied  
Linguistics and Discourse Studies  
Executive Summary and Final Assessment**

This Executive Summary and Final Assessment Report of the cyclical review of Carleton's MA in Applied Linguistics and Discourse Studies are provided pursuant to articles 4.2.5-4.2.6 of the provincial Quality Assurance Framework and article 5.1.9.23-24 and 5.1.9.26-27 of Carleton's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP).

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The Master's program in Applied Linguistics and Discourse Studies is administered by Carleton University's School of Linguistics and Language Studies, an academic unit of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. As a consequence of the review, the MA program was categorised by the Carleton University Committee on Quality Assurance (CUCQA) as being of **GOOD QUALITY WITH NATIONAL PRESENCE** (Carleton's IQAP 5.1.9.12).

The external reviewers' report, submitted on January 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015, offered a very positive assessment of the MA program. The reviewers enthusiastically noted that "the program is a model for research production at Carleton... Indeed, this program is at the heart of Rhetorical Genre Studies and Applied Language Studies in Canada." They added that "the quality of the program is particularly evident in terms of student productivity. The number of student publications in peer-reviewed journals as both authors and co-authors is impressive." Both nationally and internationally, the reviewers remarked, "the program is recognized as being unique and of high quality."

The report also stressed that "this program has excellent connections with other areas at Carleton. Indeed, through the activities of its faculty and students the program contributes substantially to the writing centre, educational development, the research ethics board, and other academic areas such as Psychology, Engineering, and English."

Within the context of this very positive assessment, the report nonetheless made a few recommendations for the continuing enhancement of the graduate program. Most of the recommendations were accepted by the School, the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in a response to the report of the external reviewers that was received by CUCQA on June 24<sup>th</sup>, 2015.

On September 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2015, CUCQA received and approved an Action Plan describing how and when these recommendations will be addressed. The recommendations and the actions to be taken are detailed in the Action Plan.

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**MEMORANDUM**

DATE: September 1, 2015

TO: Dr. John Shepherd, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice President (Academic)

CC: Dr. Catherine Khordoc, Interim Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences  
Dr. Matthias Neufang, Dean, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs  
Dr. Adrian Chan, Associate Dean (Programs and Awards), Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs  
Dr. André Loiselle, Assistant Vice-President (Academic), Office of the Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Academic)  
Jessice DeVries, Manager, Office of the Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Academic)  
Cassandra Larose, Program Review Officer, Office of the Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Academic)

FROM: Dr. Randall Gess, Director, School of Linguistics and Language Studies

RE: Action plan in response to the Outcome of Cyclical Review for the Master's Program in Applied Linguistics and Discourse Studies

In response to your memo of June 30<sup>th</sup>, 2015, informing us of the categorisation of our program as **“good quality with national presence”** following “a very successful review”, please find below the Action Plan that you requested.

1. Develop a long-term strategic hiring plan to deal with impending faculty retirement;

First, it must be recognized that it is difficult to discuss “impending faculty retirement” when we do not always know who may be retiring, and we do not ask (to our knowledge, it is not permissible to do so). Nevertheless, of our four most recent retirements we have successfully hired two replacements (Dr. Eva Kartchava and Dr. Kristin Snoddon) and are in the process of hiring for the last two (positions have been approved for Indigenous/Minority Language Issues and Technology and Language Teaching/Learning). The nature of all of these positions was discussed at length by faculty members in Applied Linguistics and Discourse Studies, either as the principle agenda item at a retreat, or at a series of meetings dedicated to this topic alone. The same group will discuss long-term hiring each term going forward, with more substantive

discussions taking place (at retreats and/or at dedicated, stand-alone meetings) when impending retirements are actually known. Principles guiding our discussions have been the balance between Applied Linguistics and Discourse Studies, graduate supervision needs, and positioning the program strategically in light of current and projected developments in research and the workplace. These principles will continue to guide discussions.

2. Develop a long-term vision for the whole of the graduate program;

To provide additional context regarding the perceived intent of this recommendation (based on communications with the reviewers that may not be directly reflected in their report), given the exclusion of the PhD program from the purview of the Cyclical Review of the MA program, the reviewers raised questions about the relationship between the two programs and recommended developing a long-term vision for the whole of the graduate program. Areas of concern included balancing (staffing) resources across the two programs, facilitating recruitment from one program to another, and developing a clear curriculum sequence. Some relevant discussions have already taken place over Spring/Summer 2015. These have focused on a fast-track option for admission to the MA program, which was approved, and the structure of courses at the PhD level (curriculum changes have been submitted). The restructuring of courses at the PhD level will allow more time for supervision. Further discussions will take place in 2015/16 on monitoring intake to both programs with an eye to supervision loads, “streamlining” supervision, and the number of courses offered at the MA level. All discussions will bear in mind the need for a healthy balance between the MA and PhD programs.

3. Encourage a culture that attends to promotion through the professorial ranks;

The Director of SLALS will meet annually, in April or May, with each faculty member who has held the rank of Associate Professor for four years or more to discuss the timeline for applying for promotion to Full Professor and the requirements for promotion. Already this year we have two faculty members in ALDS applying for promotion to Full Professor. The restructuring of courses at the PhD level, mentioned above (3), will also allow for more time for research, which will assist those at the Associate Professor level in meeting the requirements for Full Professor.

4. Improve the program’s visibility at Carleton and beyond;

The Director of SLALS will make a request to ODFASS (Communications Officer) for assistance in highlighting the program in various venues. The Dean of FASS has already expressed her strong support informally. Two professional-quality videos will be developed in Fall 2015 by BIT students in the project-based course, CCDP 3003, Communication Skills for Interactive Multimedia and Design. The School website will also be redesigned this year with prioritization of the MA program in mind. Finally, although we have been quite successful in attracting attendees to our annual Graduate Symposium in Fall term, we will advertise more widely beginning this year, and we will do so for our brown bag lunches as well. With respect to the Symposium specifically, we are also considering moving this event to Winter term to allow 4th-year students to present honours projects or term papers. The intent of this would be to encourage 4th-year students to interact with graduate students and apply to the MA program. The move is being considered also because (1) first-year MA students will be in a much better

position to showcase their work (e.g., a paper they have produced in the Fall term) and, (2) second-year MA students will find themselves closer to finishing up their theses or research essays and may wish to make presentations based on that work. This has yet to be fully discussed and ratified by the ALDS Graduate Committee. All faculty members will continue to make connections across campus and externally for collaborations, and to engage in external service activities.

5. The program needs to promote itself more vigorously to compete for enrolments.

As mentioned above (2), we have recently added the fast-track option for admission to the MA, which should strengthen our enrolments coming from the BA program in ALDS. The video outlined above (4) can also serve for program promotion and student recruitment. In Fall term, we will hire a work-study student to help promote the program externally through direct marketing. In November, we will survey current MA students to see how they heard about our program and to solicit input on how best to reach potential applicants.

Recommendation	Steps to take	Responsible	Timeline
Develop a long-term strategic hiring plan to deal with impending faculty retirement	Continue discussing long-term hiring each term going forward, with more substantive discussions taking place (at retreats and/or at dedicated, stand-alone meetings) when impending retirements are actually known.	ALDS Committee (Chair, Assistant Director, ALDS)	Ongoing
Develop a long-term vision for the whole of the graduate program	Continue discussions on balancing (staffing) resources across the MA and PhD programs, facilitating recruitment from one program to another, and developing a clear curriculum sequence.	Graduate Committee (Chair, Graduate Supervisor)	2015/16 and ongoing
Encourage a culture that attends to promotion through the professorial ranks	The Director of SLALS will meet annually with each faculty member who has held the rank of Associate Professor for four years or more to discuss the timeline for applying for promotion to Full Professor and the requirements for promotion.	Director	Annually, April or May
Improve the program's visibility at Carleton and beyond	Request assistance from ODFASS (Communications Officer); development of promotional videos by CCDP 3003 students; website redesign; market events	Director  Director/Graduate Supervisor Director w/staff Graduate Supervisor	Fall 2015  Fall 2015 2015/16 2015/16
The program needs to promote itself more vigorously to compete for enrolments	Video development referenced above; hire a work-study student to help promote the program externally; survey current MA students	Director/Graduate Supervisor Graduate Supervisor Graduate Supervisor Graduate Supervisor	Fall 2015  Fall 2015  November 2015