

**CARLETON UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON
QUALITY ASSURANCE
Cyclical Review of the undergraduate and graduate programs
in Psychology
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 Psychology 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 Psychology reside in the Department of Psychology, 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 Department of Psychology 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 January 11th, 2024.

Psychology
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 Department was pleased to receive the Reviewers' very positive External Reviewers' report. This report was shared with our faculty and staff, and we are committed to the continual improvement of our programs to enhance the student, staff, and faculty experience. This document contains both a response to the External Reviewers' Report and an Implementation Plan (Section B) which have been created in consultation with the Dean(s).

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: Psychology

Prepared by (name/position/unit/date): Guy Lacroix, Department Chair, Psychology

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)
1. Development of a space plan and policy for department. Space issues are many and complex. Our recommendation is that in consultation with the Faculty and University, the department should develop a space plan to address the ongoing space crisis and future needs. In tandem, the department should develop a space policy to be used to review, reclaim, and assign space based on developing needs of incoming or current faculty (e.g., when a faculty member receives a new grant). Weakness	Agreed to unconditionally	The Department has been in communication with the Faculty and the university to solve its space challenges. The Department has already established a plan to address its space needs, which was communicated to the Dean of FASS in the fall of 2022. Otherwise, the Department already has a policy to assign space based on developing the needs of incoming and current faculty, but it is dependent on availability.	Mostly Upper Administration	N/A	No
2. Establish an Equity Diversity Inclusion and Accessibility (EDIA) committee to review faculty hiring, graduate recruitment & scholarships, and course content decolonization. We recommend that the department establish an EDIA committee to embed equity in all facets of the Department through intentional action; affirming and aligning	Not agreed to	We believe we are already engaged with EDI and we don't need a committee established to further our approaches. 2a. Carleton already has a comprehensive, progressive, and balanced EDIA policy which our Department has fully adhered to. Our hiring committees are struck accordingly and we apply the principle that "Where the qualifications of two candidates for appointment are demonstrably equal	Department	N/A	N/A

<p>equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility work and initiatives; and amplifying marginalized voices. This committee would work with the department chair to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> review faculty hiring priorities to increase EDIA in the faculty hires (e.g., by implementing EDIA practices like the Canada Research Chair Program). implement a policy that accounts for EDIA in the recruitment of graduate students to increase diversity. create transparent processes for reviewing and assigning student scholarships that consider barriers encountered by historically underrepresented students in Psychology. Review curriculum at the undergraduate and graduate level with respects to decolonizing the content, and where appropriate, increasing black, indigenous and people of colour content with the courses. Opportunity 		<p>and one of the candidates is a member of a group that is under-represented in continuing appointments in the unit, then the candidate from the under-represented group should be offered the position". Otherwise, our Department reached gender equality in the last century and, in recent years, it has recruited outstanding researchers who fall under the different EDIA categories. Thus, we already apply EDIA best practices as established by the University. The Department is strongly committed to keep doing so.</p> <p>b. Our recruitment policy for graduate students currently accounts for EDIA. Each year, we receive some 160 to 200 applications, which allows us to recruit and foster a highly diverse group of graduate students. We will strive to keep our recruitment practices aligned with the latest recommendations of the university and the larger academic community.</p> <p>c. The processes for reviewing and assigning student scholarships are transparent. They are communicated to students via different media including proseminar workshop presentations, detailed departmental emails, and information posted on our website. The Department will keep working closely with graduate students and faculty to ensure that we continue to submit the highest possible number of successful scholarship applications each year. Our continued support will be given to all students including those historically under-represented in Psychology.</p> <p>d. The Department will explore ways of reviewing the curriculum with respects to decolonizing the content, and where appropriate, increasing Black, Indigenous and people of colour content within the Department's courses. This process will be carried out with a focus on faculty's collective agreement right to academic freedom.</p>			
<p>3. Workload remissions for graduate and undergraduate (thesis) students. Students doing psychology research projects in a research lab environment take much time for supervision. Such training is not currently recognized but should be. We recommend that the department discuss a formula of teaching remission with the Dean of FASS to compensate faculty members for this</p>	<p>3a. Workload is currently a challenge for faculty members in the Department of Psychology (Agreed to if</p>	<p>a. The Department agrees that workload continues to be challenge considering class sizes, the number of Honours and graduate supervisions, and the demands of funded programs of research. In collaboration with the Dean's office, the Department will continue to give consideration to faculty members workload offering additional TA support and teaching releases for heavy administrative loads when funding allows.we will raise</p>	<p>FASS and Department</p>	<p>Jan 2023 and ongoing</p>	<p>No</p>

<p>teaching. For example, 8 supervision points equates to a one-course remission, with one supervision point per graduate student (in normal residence), and ½ a point per undergraduate student. This will also have a secondary benefit of encouraging faculty to supervise honours students. It would also bring the department into alignment with other research intensive psychology departments across Canada. Weakness</p>	<p>additional resources permit). 3b. A point system (similar to the one used at the University of Ottawa) should be used to address the problem (Not agreed to).</p>	<p>the issue with the Dean and work together to explore ways to address faculty's workload challenges. b. We do not wish to commit to any solution (like the proposed point system) at this time, however. The problem is complex, and any solution must also allow the Department to meet its program obligations.</p>			
<p>4. Increase staff assistant undergraduate advisor level to reduce turnover. To reduce the turnover, improve advising ability to a very large undergraduate cohort, we recommend that the department negotiate with the Faculty and University to increase the level of this position. This will avoid increasing the workload on the undergraduate program assistant (due to having to train a new assistant), while maintaining the student experience. Weakness</p>	<p>Agreed to unconditionally</p>	<p>The Department agrees with this proposition and will work in collaboration with the Dean's Office to implement it. It will also assess the workload of its administrative team in cooperation with the Office of Quality Initiatives and determine if other adjustments can be made.</p>	<p>Department and FASS</p>	<p>Sept 24</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>5. Review advising. While advising is somewhat satisfactory, there is a potential to review different types of avenues for advising. Many advising issues could be handled by providing alternative resources for students (e.g., social media videos, infographics), and making information easier for students to find. We recommend that the department review their advising – both at the undergraduate and graduate level – and explore best practices that can be implemented to improve the student experience. Opportunity</p>	<p>Agreed to unconditionally</p>	<p>The Department already offers a vast array of advising resources to undergraduate and graduate students that include information pages, Q&As, Youtube videos, and degree progression charts. It will continue to keep these resources up to date and aligned with students' needs. Nonetheless, our reliance on social media to reach out to students has been almost non-existent. With the hire of our Placement and External Relations Officer, we expect this aspect of our communications with students to improve drastically in the short-term.</p>	<p>Department</p>	<p>Completed</p>	<p>No</p>

<p>6. a. Continue discussions with other departments (e.g., Cognitive Science, Criminology, Linguistics) that heavily use Psychology for service courses, to reduce pressures on the department. Work on allowing PSYC students priority in enrollment for Year 3&4 courses. Reducing the demand on student numbers in psychology courses by non-psychology departments is critical to the future health of the program.</p> <p>b. In situations where it is mutually beneficial (e.g., BSc programs), arrangements should be made with other departments to trade spaces in key required courses. Concern</p>	<p>6a. Agreed to unconditionally</p> <p>6b. Not agreed to</p>	<p>a. This process was started last summer and is almost completed. Cognitive Science and Criminology have reduced their demands on our courses. Moreover, Cognitive Science has opened courses that are of interest to some of our students. While this effort was worthwhile, the overall impact on our class sizes is small. In collaboration with the Dean's Office, the Department will continue to explore ways of offering reasonably sized courses especially in the 3rd and 4th years.</p> <p>b. While there is some merit to this suggestion, most of our BA students do not have the prerequisites to take courses offered in the Faculty of Science. Hence, its impact would be highly limited because it would be limited to BSc students. Moreover, we would argue that our Department should offer all courses in Psychology.</p>	Department	Sept 24	No
<p>7. Increase TA to allow department to maintain pedagogical standards esp. in Year 3 courses. In 2019, TA budget was cut by 16% and has not been increased since – despite increases in enrollment numbers. We recommend that the department discuss with the faculty to establish a formula linking enrollment/class size to TA support, allowing the department to maintain the pedagogical goals of each course. Concern</p>	Agreed to if additional resources permit	<p>In collaboration with the Dean's Office, we will strive to provide TA coverage to our classes that is as comprehensive as possible. We acknowledge, however, that it is challenging for FASS to provide us with enough TAs that have the appropriate training in Psychology. Our TA demand exceeds the number of graduate students in Psychology who have TAs. We will seek to determine with FASS if there are solutions to this issue.</p>	FASS and Department	Jan 24	No
<p>8. a. Review Graduate Funding. The current level of support from Graduate Studies has remained unchanged in 10 years, despite the increased cost of living. Other comparable Universities have increased funding, while also providing longer funding packages (e.g., 5 years guaranteed for MA/PhD program). This makes it more difficult for faculty to recruit graduate students. The department should discuss this with other units in the Faculty and allied fields (e.g., neuroscience), to present a case to Graduate Studies to increase funding for scholarships.</p> <p>b. We also recommend that the department review their own minimum level of support that faculty</p>	<p>8a. Agreed to if additional resources permit</p> <p>8b. Not agreed to</p>	<p>8a. The Department and FASS wholeheartedly agree that graduate funding is insufficient. Unfortunately, we have limited power over the situation. Most faculty who receive Tri-Council support do give students additional funding, but these amounts remain modest. We are largely dependent upon the university for funding increases, and they rely largely on means provided by the provincial and federal governments. We will raise the issue again with Dean and explore if there are any solutions the Dean and FGPA can put on the table.</p> <p>8b. The Department does not agree to this recommendation. Research funding varies among faculty members. Hence, their ability to financially support students is unequal. If this suggestion were put into effect, it is unclear that it would increase recruitment. In fact, we would argue that it</p>	FASS, Upper Management, and provincial and federal governments	Jan 24	No

<p>must provide to take on a new student, and support stable funding level over the academic year. This will increase graduate recruitment and retention in the department, while also reducing the financial burden on students. Weakness</p>		<p>would reduce the total number of students in our graduate programs because some faculty would not have the funding to take on new ones.</p>			
<p>9. a) Increase offerings of department level professional development workshops (e.g., scholarship writing) and area meetings. The department should review the variety of offerings for department level workshops that benefit faculty and students.</p> <p>b) The department should also review and support the development of area meetings (e.g., social group) to increase interactions between faculty and graduate students. Opportunity</p>	<p>9a. Agreed to unconditionally</p> <p>9b. Not agreed to</p>	<p>The Department already offers a variety of workshop via its mandatory graduate proseminar series. They cover a variety of topics including scholarship writing, scientific writing, and the scholarship application process. The Department will continue to monitor students' needs to adjust its curriculum accordingly.</p> <p>9b. This is certainly an excellent idea, and many research groups do meet spontaneously in all areas. While the Department will continue to encourage and support these activities, it believes that faculty ultimately have the freedom to organize them as they see fit.</p>	<p>Department</p>	<p>Done</p>	<p>No</p>
<p>10. Explore option for regular scheduling for courses, remote graduate training & asynchronous learning. The department has a long history of supporting flexible learning at the undergraduate level. Many graduate students could also benefit from flexible modality and frequency of offerings, especially in the statistics courses that many of the students wish to take as part of the concentration in statistics in the PhD program. We recommend that the department review and create a regular schedule for all graduate courses, that incorporates some asynchronous learning opportunities for students. Opportunity</p>	<p>Not agreed to</p>	<p>Currently, the statistics requirement for our MA program is 1.0 credit over two years, and 1.0 credit over six for our PhD. Considering that they are a core element of the program and that we wish to foster student interaction with peers and faculty (See 9b), we do not currently plan to offer these courses at a distance. The Department will continue to monitor students' needs carefully, however. As for the statistics course offering, the Department does have a plan and courses are offered on a rotating basis. It is challenging to accomplish this rotation perfectly, however. Faculty availability to teach these courses vary from year to year because of sabbaticals, course buyouts, and other types of leave.</p>	<p>Department</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>