

**CARLETON UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON  
QUALITY ASSURANCE  
Cyclical Review of the undergraduate and graduate programs  
in Religion  
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 Religion 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 Religion 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 November 9<sup>th</sup>, 2023, 2023.

**Religion**  
**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 Religion Program was pleased to receive the reviewers' very positive comments and suggestions. This report was shared with our faculty, and we are committed to the continual improvement of our programs to enhance the student, staff, and faculty experience. We also enjoyed our very brief meeting with the reviewers. We think, however, that all parties would have benefited immensely from an in-person campus visit. In particular, the reviewers have misunderstood two features of our MA in Religion and Public Life: that we offer a professional degree "aimed at training students to find jobs and applied work on issues related to contemporary life in the modern world" and that we require incoming students to have a BA in Religion. We will need to consider these misunderstandings as we seriously engage with the recommendations as a group in the fall of 2023. We feel these errors would not have been made with extended in-person conversations about the program and its challenges.

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: BA in Religion, MA Religion and Public Life

Prepared by (name/position/unit/date):

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. Cooperate with Indigenous Studies or other unit to identify or create appropriate course taught by FT faculty. <b>Concern</b>	<i>Agreed to in principle</i>	<i>The program will consult with ODFASS and the Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies in order to find or create an appropriate course for the program.</i>	<i>RELI</i>	<i>Ongoing.</i>	<i>Unknown.</i>
2. Create a Religion and Public life programme that focuses on contemporary issues and includes experiential learning (or revert to simply Religious Studies). <b>Weakness and opportunity</b>	<i>Not agreed to</i>	<i>The program met in September to consider the proposal that the MA focus solely on contemporary issues. This proposal from the reviewers was based on the misapprehension that we are a program "aimed at training students to find jobs and applied work on issues related to contemporary life in the modern world," and thus they felt the "lack of temporal and spatial limits" hampered the goals of the MA. The goal of the MA is emphatically not to produce policy makers and advisors, but rather to foster an ability to navigate the theoretical challenges of analyzing 'religion', 'public life', and the intersection of these two complex things. With that as</i>	<i>RELI</i>	<i>Immediate</i>	<i>Unknown.</i>

		<i>the goal of MA, the temporal and spatial openness is a strength, not a weakness.</i>			
3. See 2): a course-based project without a lengthy paper should shorten times. <b>Weakness</b>	<i>Not agreed to</i>	<i>The program met in September to consider this proposal. Converting to a course-work MA would require the program to mount more courses at the 4th-5<sup>th</sup> year level. This would require us to rely even to a greater extent than we already do as a small program on CIs, which neither the reviewers or FASS wants. In addition, many of our students have gone on successfully to complete PhDs, and we feel strongly that their success (and even admission) was assisted considerably by having completed an MRE, rather than merely course-work</i>	<i>RELI</i>	<i>Immediate</i>	<i>Unknown.</i>
4. Do not require BA in Religion for MA admission, especially for a programme in Religion and Public Life. <b>Weakness</b>	<i>Agreed to unconditionally.</i>	<i>This is in fact already the case, and it stated on the MA Website: students are <b>not required</b> to have a BA in Religion for admission. We will review the website information for places where more clarity could help (e.g., defining 'cognate disciplines').</i>	<i>RELI</i>	<i>Immediate</i>	<i>No.</i>
5. We recommend developing a structure that enhances cooperation rather than competition between faculty in different units, encouraging consultation and participation on religion-related searches and joint searches, cross-listing courses,	<i>Agreed to in principle.</i>	<i>The program will raise these issues with ODFASS and at FASS faculty board. We would like to see Religion consulted when courses in other units are proposed that touch on the subject of Religious Studies, but it is beyond our purview to require this</i>	<i>RELI</i>	<i>2023-4 academic year.</i>	<i>No.</i>

and providing sustainable funding streams for smaller units such as Religion which do not depend on growing the number of majors. <b>Weakness</b>					
6. Expand the full time faculty with a position in, for example, Indigenous Religions, Hinduism, African & Afro-Caribbean religions, with a hire that would diversify the almost all-white faculty. <b>Weakness or challenge</b>	<i>Agreed to unconditionally.</i>	<i>The program will request an additional hire from ODFASS, as it has several times already.</i>	<i>RELI, ODFASS</i>	<i>2023-4 academic year</i>	<i>No</i>
7. Improve library resources, in consultation with the faculty and while defining the collection (e.g. faculty research or primarily student needs, emphasis on material relevant to Religion in Public Life, if that is to be the focus of the MA). <b>Weakness</b>	<i>Agreed to unconditionally.</i>	<i>The program will request additional resources from the library, who is responsible for Library Collections.</i>	<i>RELI, Library</i>	<i>2023-24 academic year.</i>	<i>No.</i>

**Final Note:** We are pleased to accept the advice of the SQAPC (re. Table 5 and 6) to implement changes to the Learning Outcomes as we go (and as needed) rather than wait until year 5 to implement them all at once.