

Update on Unit Response to External Reviewers' Report & Action Plan
Programs Being Reviewed: Undergraduate and Graduate Programs
Completed by: Guy Lacroix, Chair
Approved by Dean: September 16th, 2025

Note: This document is made available for public posting on the Vice- Provost's website.

***** Denotes items that SQAPC would like the unit to pay particular attention to based on their past review of the original action item.**

External Reviewer Recommendation	Original Action Item and Unit response	Owner & Timeline	Progress Update DATE	Have calendar changes been initiated or completed (Not applicable/Yes/No), if Yes, when
<p>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</p>	<p>Agreed to unconditionally.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Mostly Upper Administration/ N/A</p>	<p>As it has been for over twenty years, the Department's space is inadequate. Our faculty and labs are still spread out over five building and 17 floors. The Department did invest in a new and bigger departmental meeting room that allows for virtual meetings. The Department also lost its largest laboratory room on the 4th floor of Loeb during the last year. Finally, there is still no space where students can feel like they are "in psychology." The University is currently working on new structures, processes, and guidelines for addressing space needs and issues. The Department has been told that it will be contacted when those pieces are in place.</p>	

<p>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 equity, diversity, inclusion and accessibility work and initiatives; and amplifying marginalized voices.</p> <p>This committee would work with the department chair to:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> a. review faculty hiring priorities to increase EDIA in the faculty hires (e.g., by implementing EDIA practices like the Canada Research Chair Program). b. implement a policy that accounts for EDIA in the recruitment of graduate students to increase diversity. c. create transparent processes for reviewing and assigning student scholarships that consider barriers encountered by historically underrepresented students in Psychology. d. 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>Not agreed to</p> <p><u>We believe we are already engaged with EDI and we don't need a committee established to further our approaches.</u></p> <p>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 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”.</p> <p>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,</p>	<p>Department/ N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>
---	--	------------------------	------------	------------

	<p>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 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.</p> <p>Weakness</p>	<p>a. Agreed if additional Resources permit. 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 the issue with the Dean and work together to explore ways to address faculty's workload challenges.</p> <p>b. Not agreed to. 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>FASS and Department/ Jan 2023 and ongoing</p>	<p>During the last 18 months, the Department has lost 4.0 FTE faculty positions. Considering that the workload challenges outlined in the CPR were already considerable, this additional decrease in resources may be unsustainable because it may prevent faculty from attending to their research, teaching, and administrative duties as prescribed in the CUASA collective agreement. The Department will continue to seek solutions with ODFASS.</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. 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/ Sept 24</p>	<p>While an undergraduate adviser position was added to our Undergraduate Office, two of our CUPE 2424 positions were made redundant: the Administrative Assistant to the Chair and the Placement and External Relations Office. The net result is that only six staff members will be supporting the department instead of seven. It should be further noted that our student-to-staff ratio is by far the largest one at Carleton for any department. Therefore, we expect continued challenges providing the necessary services to our faculty, CIs, TAs, and students.</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. 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/ Completed</p>	<p>The comments presented in #4 apply here. As our Placement and External Relations Office position has been made redundant, social media communications from the Department will be greatly reduced. There is a dedicated Communications Officer in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences that may be able to support the unit’s outreach strategies.</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>a. Agreed to unconditionally. 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</p>	<p>Department/ Sept 24</p>	<p>The Department had some success negotiating with Cognitive Science to lower the pressure of its programs on our class offering and sizes,. All OIRP data suggest that psychology courses are by far the largest ones in FASS (and Carleton). This is especially true for third year courses. For example, in 2024-25, Cognitive Science offered 4 sections of its 3rd year course</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>Office, the Department will continue to explore ways of offering reasonably sized courses especially in the 3rd and 4th years.</p> <p>b. Not agreed to. 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>		<p><i>Memory Processes.</i> Each was capped at 30 students. During the same year, our Department was forced to offer only three sections of the 3rd year course <i>Criminal Behavior</i> with an average cap of 183 students. Otherwise, psychology continues to absorb students from other programs which starting next year will include nursing and a new degree in accounting. Every indicator suggests that class sizes will be higher and program quality will be lower for psychology students by the end of this 6-year CRP review cycle.</p>	
<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>	<p>Agreed to if additional resources permit. 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 TAships. We will seek to determine with FASS if there are solutions to this issue.</p>	<p>FASS and Department/ Jan 24</p>	<p>To its credit, FASS continues to support the Department’s need for atypical TA coverage in certain small courses (including the third-year seminar, PSYC 300, & the Project). Without this flexibility, the department’s ability to meet its pedagogical obligations (especially writing, oral presentation skills, and quantitative analysis) would disintegrate. That being said, class sizes and TA ratios force course instructors to rely mainly on tests (and mostly MC) to evaluate students.</p>	
<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</p>	<p>8a. Agreed to if additional resources permit. 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</p>	<p>FASS, Upper Management, and provincial and federal governments/ Jan 24</p>	<p>Graduate student funding continues to be stagnant, but that is largely outside the Department’s control. However, the Department has been giving feedback to the new Graduate Studies office since FGPA was dissolved on all its suggested policy changes. This includes graduate student funding and TAship award decisions.</p>	

<p>funding for scholarships.</p> <p>b. We also recommend that the department review their own minimum level of support that faculty 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>with Dean and explore if there are any solutions the Dean and FGPA can put on the table.</p> <p>8b. Not agreed to. 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 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. 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. Not agreed to. 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>	Department/ Done	The Department continues to offer a variety of workshops via its mandatory proseminar series.	
<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</p>	<p>Not agreed to. 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</p>	Department/ N/A	N/A	

students. Opportunity	perfectly, however. Faculty availability to teach these courses vary from year to year because of sabbaticals, course buyouts, and other types of leave.			
------------------------------	---	--	--	--