

SENATE QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
Cyclical Review of the graduate and undergraduate programs
in Applied Linguistics and Discourse Studies
Executive Summary and Final Assessment Report

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The graduate and undergraduate programs reside in the School of Linguistics and Language Studies, 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 School of Linguistics and Language Studies in responses to the External Reviewers' report and Implementation on Plan that was submitted to SQAPC on August 29th, 2025.

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Introduction

The graduate and undergraduate programs in Applied Linguistics and Discourse Studies reside in the School of Linguistics and Language Studies, a unit administered by the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences. This review was conducted pursuant to the Quality Assurance Framework and Carleton's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP). 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 7.2.13-14).

The site visit, which took place on February 6-7, 2025, was conducted by Dr. Elisabeth Le from the University of Alberta, and Dr. Jennifer Clary-Lemon from the University of Waterloo. The site visit involved formal meetings with the Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Academic), the Associate Vice-President (Academic Programs and Strategic Initiatives), the Associate Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences, the Vice-Provost (Graduate Studies) and the Director and Assistant Director of the School of Linguistics and Language Studies. The review committee also met with faculty members, staff, and undergraduate and graduate students.

The External Reviewers' report, submitted on February 13th, 2025 offered a very positive assessment of the program.

This Final Assessment Report provides a summary of:

- Strengths of the programs
- Challenges faced by the programs
- Opportunities for program improvement and enhancement
- The Outcome of the Review
- The Implementation Plan

This report draws on five documents:

- The Self-study developed by members of the Applied Linguistics and Discourse Studies program (Appendix A)
- The Report of the External Review Committee (Appendix B).
- The response and implementation plan from the Applied Linguistics and Discourse Studies program (Appendix C)
- The Response from the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (Appendix D).
- The internal discussant's recommendation report (Appendix E).

Appendix F contains brief biographies of the members of the External Review Committee.

This Final Assessment Report contains the Implementation Plan (Appendix C) developed by the Director of the School of Linguistics and Language Studies and agreed to by the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences for the implementation of recommendations for program enhancement identified as part of the cyclical program review process.

The Implementation Plan identifies who is responsible for implementing the agreed upon recommendations, as well as the timelines for implementation and reporting.

Strengths of the programs

General

The External Reviewers' Report states that "[t]he study of language use in the fields of Applied Linguistics and Discourse Studies in order to tackle real-world problems leads naturally to interdisciplinarity...This is furthered by the ALDS' focus on innovative pedagogy and language teaching, which has clear programmatic outputs of the CTESL and MTEAL programs, as well as the praxis component of the PhD. Echoed by multiple constituents within and outside of the unit is the notion that the program is a "hidden gem" (p. 2).

Faculty

Speaking with regard to faculty, the external reviewers' stated: "[i]t is clear that faculty are attentive to graduate students and their supervision in the department, and graduate student cohorting and community, inclusive of designated space for graduate students, is being carefully implemented. Students themselves speak highly of their courses and interactions with faculty, and are taking their requirements at the graduate level in all cases but the pilot 4th year BA and 1st year MA classes that are currently in development" (p. 4).

Curriculum

The external reviewers noted that "[i]t is clear from speaking with students at the undergraduate and graduate level that a highlight of student experience is in coursework, where they can develop close relationships with faculty and hone, in many cases, their own approaches to pedagogy. It is clear from the types of assessments given at varying levels of the BA, MA, and PhD, that students get the opportunity to practice in both genre (reflection, argument, proposal, synthesis, teaching lessons, analysis, reviews) and delivery (quiz, oral presentation, writing, small group discussion) in ways appropriate to program level" (p. 6).

Opportunities for program improvement and enhancement

The External Reviewers' Report made 10 recommendations for improvement:

1. Revise the undergraduate curriculum. (Weakness)
2. Reduce time-to-completion at the PhD level so that students remain in funding throughout the course of their degree program. (Weakness)
3. Increase accountability measures between faculty and students at the graduate level by instituting a mandatory annual progress report process. (Weakness)
4. Share service work and teaching at the 1000-level among faculty members equitably. (Concern)
5. Recruitment at Unit Level: To address the decrease of enrollment and the perception that ALDS is not known / understood, develop recruitment strategies involving students presenting on campus and in the community (Concern)
6. Ensure curriculum committee meets regularly and develop a standing learning outcomes committee that periodically reviews student work at UG and G levels. (Opportunity)
7. Use revenue generated from the MTEAL program to prioritize hiring in ALDS to replace faculty retirements and retain program quality. (Concern)

8. Recruitment at Faculty/University level: Ensure better coordination and communication between the University, Faculty and unit levels so that the most notable events / success at one level are systematically recognized and communicated on the web page / in social media of the next highest level. (Concern)
9. Revisit supervisory policies for junior faculty. (Opportunity)
10. Have all components of the ALDS unit in one building. (Opportunity)

The Outcome of the Review

As a consequence of the review, the graduate and undergraduate programs in Applied Linguistics and Language Studies were categorized by Carleton University's Senate Quality Assurance and Planning Committee (SQAPC) as being of **GOOD QUALITY** (Carleton's IQAP 7.2.13-14).

The Implementation Plan

The recommendations that were put forward as a result of the review process were productively addressed by the Director of the School of Linguistics and Language Studies and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences in responses to the External Reviewers' report and Implementation Plan that was considered by SQAPC on August 28th, 2025. The School agreed unconditionally to recommendations #1, #3, #6, #8 and #9, and agreed in principle to recommendations #4, #5, #7 and #10. The unit did not agree to recommendations #2, but provided adequate rationale for their response.

It is to be noted that Carleton's IQAP provides for the monitoring of implementation plans. A monitoring report is to be submitted by the academic units and Faculty Dean and forwarded to SQAPC for its review by June 2028

The Next Cyclical Review

The next cyclical review of the graduate and undergraduate programs in Applied Linguistics and Discourse Studies will be conducted during the 2030-2031 academic year.

Applied Linguistics and Discourse Studies
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. You may also highlight anything noteworthy which you would like included as part of your final assessment report and executive summary.

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 Course leaf 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: Applied Linguistics and Discourse Studies

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

Dr. Geoff Pinchbeck, Interim Chair of Applied Linguistics and Discourse Studies, March 21, 2025

External Reviewer Recommendation & Categorization Note: Recommendations highlighted in yellow were also made as part of a previous review	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) Revise the undergraduate curriculum: Weakness	<i>1 - Agreed to unconditionally</i>	<p><i>We will work with ALDS faculty to create a timeline for revision of the undergraduate curriculum. We will reduce courses that no longer reflect the faculty that is currently part of the unit, and we will create courses that reflect the background and research of the current faculty.</i></p> <p><i>Our curriculum committee has met twice since the external reviewer report was provided, and planned revisions to the curriculum include:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A review of courses that are no longer applicable to the faculty and their areas of expertise that are currently in the school. Vestigial courses and programs will be culled EX PW, and new courses 	Assistant Director	Starting in Winter 2025 and ongoing	Y

		<p>added to the curriculum to reflect the current faculty.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>The Professional Writing program has already been dissolved due to faculty retirements and low enrollment</i> • <i>Each course at any level will be designed to be teachable by more than one faculty member.</i> • Streamlining offerings in the ALDS program such that all courses can be regularly taught by the faculty that we have available. This will result in more balanced offerings between Applied Linguistics and the Discourse Studies courses. • Creation of a limited number of Special Topic courses at the 3rd and 4th year level based on concentrations of faculty expertise that allows students to study more deeply in the specialisations of the unit's available faculty and for multiple faculty members to teach the courses across different academic years. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ <i>E.g., Language and Technology - the opportunities and problems posed by Artificial Intelligence.</i> <p><i>Although streaming that fits with the goals and the resources available to the ALDS</i></p>			
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		<p><i>program is planned, we deemed some of the specific recommendations made by the reviewers to be impractical and might possibly reflect the limited time the reviewers had to perform their investigation and analyses.</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>E.g., use ALDS 1001 (often online) student assignments for in-person high-school recruitment activities seemed misplaced.</i> 			
<p>2) Reduce time-to-completion at the PhD level so that students remain in funding throughout the course of their degree program</p> <p>Weakness</p>	<p><i>4- Not agreed to. The Reviewers report that our average time-to-completion for PhD students is more than 6 years. Our own numbers (corroborated by those of ORIP) show an average time of 4.7 years, which is less than what the reviewers recommend; furthermore, our figures include time away during official leaves for health, etc. We will, however, implement their suggestion (below) for annual progress reports.</i></p>	<p><i>Na</i></p>	<p><i>na</i></p>	<p><i>na</i></p>	
<p>3) Increase accountability measures between faculty and students at the graduate level by instituting a mandatory annual progress report process</p> <p>Weakness</p>	<p><i>1 – agree to unconditionally</i></p>	<p><i>We will work with ALDS faculty to create a timeline for implementation of a standardized form for mandatory annual progress report for PhD students by the end of the next school year, April 2026. We will look to other graduate programs in FASS and CU to see how this process is implemented elsewhere.</i></p>	<p><i>Grad supervisor</i></p>	<p><i>Creation of the form within the first semester of the first academic year (Fall 2025) and uptake by all students by April 2026</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>

<p>4) Share service work and teaching at the 1000-level among faculty members equitably Concern</p>	<p><i>3 – agree to in principle</i></p> <p><i>Scheduling is always done with an eye to being equitable, however, the requirements for other programs that are accredited externally dictate that certain courses can only be taught by certain regular faculty. This means that instruction of first- and second-year courses falls to the teaching stream faculty, who were hired to teach those courses.</i></p>	<p><i>Continue to review schedule with an eye to equitable distribution of lower-level courses among all faculty members, regular and teaching stream.</i></p>	<p><i>Director</i> <i>Assistant Director</i></p>	<p><i>ongoing</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>
<p>5) Recruitment at Unit Level: To address the decrease of enrollment and the perception that ALDS is not known / understood, develop recruitment strategies involving students presenting on campus and in the community Concern</p>	<p><i>3 – agree to in principle</i></p> <p><i>We are in agreement with the recommendation to develop recruitment strategies involving students presenting on campus and in the community. This approach could address some of the decrease in enrollment and improve the perception that ALDS is not well-known or understood. However, there are organizational aspects that may make this less tenable, i.e. faculty engagement with organizing such a project. So, while trying to implement this, we will also continue to explore other means of recruitment, such as: Social Media Campaigns, Collaborations with Local Organizations, Continued Participation in Open Houses, and Developing Alumni Networks.</i></p> <p><i>By combining these strategies and seeing what is effective, we can create a comprehensive recruitment plan that addresses the current challenges and enhances the visibility of ALDS.</i></p>	<p><i>Recruitment will continue to be a standing item in ALDS Meetings and Away Days.</i></p>	<p><i>Assistant Director</i></p>	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>

<p>6) Ensure curriculum committee meets regularly and develop a standing learning outcomes committee that periodically reviews student work at undergraduate and graduate levels Opportunity</p>	<p><i>1. Agree unconditionally</i> <i>We have formed a curriculum committee and we have incorporated a review of student outcomes into our regular CPR cycle.</i></p>	<p><i>A sub-committee of the Curriculum Committee will collect, analyze and compare student outcomes. These will be aligned with program outcomes listed in the CPR documentation and those in course syllabi. A database of exemplars will be maintained and made available to faculty/instructors as a reference.</i></p>	<p><i>Chair of curriculum committee</i></p>	<p><i>Ongoing through CPR cycle</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>
<p>7) Use revenue generated from the MA in Teaching English as an Additional Language (MTEAL) program to prioritize hiring in ALDS to replace faculty retirements and retain program quality Concern</p>	<p><i>3. Agree in principle</i> <i>Revenue from our programs is held and distributed at the Faculty and the University level</i></p>	<p><i>We will continue to advocate for new hiring to replace retired Faculty positions.</i></p>	<p><i>Director</i></p>	<p><i>ongoing</i></p>	<p><i>NA</i></p>
<p>8) Recruitment at Faculty/University level: Ensure better coordination and communication between the University, Faculty and unit levels so that the most notable events / success at one level are systematically recognized and communicated on the web page / in social media of the next highest level. Concern</p>	<p><i>1 Agree unconditionally.</i> <i>We do this already. Our Undergrad administrator and Director Assistant do quite a bit of work as part of regular duties. The administrator connects with the Dean's office often to get the word out about our news and events. The administrator also submits text to the Top5 (our university-wide comms portal) to spread the word.</i></p>	<p><i>Continue to communicate within the Faculty and outside the Faculty about what goes on in our programs.</i></p>	<p><i>Director</i> <i>Assistant Director</i> <i>Assistant to the Director</i></p>	<p><i>ongoing</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>
<p>9) Revisit supervisory policies for junior faculty. The university policy allows junior faculty to supervise MA students but co-supervise PhD students, which generally cuts down on supervisory capacity. Concern at this imbalance is noted and revision of this policy encouraged. Opportunity</p>	<p><i>1 – Agree unconditionally</i> <i>Graduate Studies has recently changed their policy to allow pre-tenure faculty to supervise PhD students which should increase supervisory capacity.</i> <i>Where possible, we will continue to encourage co-supervision and/or multi-faculty committee structure for PhD students.</i></p>	<p><i>individual Faculty members choose to take on thesis students at the MA and PhD level.</i></p>	<p><i>faculty</i></p>	<p><i>na</i></p>	<p><i>na</i></p>

<p>10) Have all components of the ALDS unit in one building Opportunity</p>	<p><i>3. Agree in principle</i></p> <p><i>We agree that this is an opportunity that would improve efficiencies of management, admin, research, and teaching effectiveness across SLALS, and we have been advocating for this for a long time. These decisions are taken at the Faculty level. It is based on available space. We have been encouraged in recent months that this solution might be forthcoming.</i></p>	<p><i>Working with the Dean to find a feasible solution for SLALS faculty and admin that fits with the space requirements of other Faculty units.</i></p>	<p><i>Director and School Administrator</i></p>	<p><i>At the discretion of the Dean of FASS</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>
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