

SENATE QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
Cyclical Review of the graduate and undergraduate programs
in Law and Legal 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 Law and Legal 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 in Law and Legal Studies reside in the Department of Law and Legal Studies, a unit administered by the Faculty of Public and Global Affairs.

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 Chair of the Department of Law and Legal Studies and the Dean of the Faculty of Public and Global Affairs in responses to the External Reviewers' report and Implementation on Plan that was submitted to SQAPC on April 23, 2026.

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Introduction

The graduate and undergraduate programs in Law and Legal Studies reside in the Department of Law and Legal Studies, a unit administered by the Faculty of Public and Global Affairs. 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 October 6th, 8th and 9th, 2025, was conducted by Dr. Sara Ramshaw from the University of Victoria, and Dr. Mark Antaki from McGill University. The site visit involved formal meetings with the Vice-Provost (Academic and Global Learning), the Associate Vice-President (Academic Programs and Strategic Initiatives), the Dean of the Faculty of Public and Global Affairs and the Chair of the Department of Law and Legal Studies. The review committee also met with faculty members, staff, and undergraduate and graduate students.

The External Reviewers' report, submitted on November 24th, 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 Department of Law and Legal Studies (Appendix A)
- The Report of the External Review Committee (Appendix B).
- The response and implementation plan from the Department of Law and Legal Studies (Appendix C)
- The Response from the Dean of the Faculty of Public and Global Affairs (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 Chair of the Department of Law and Legal Studies and agreed to by the Dean of the Faculty of Public and Global Affairs 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' were extremely impressed with Law and Legal Studies for 'its commitment to rigorous critical thought and interdisciplinary teaching and learning.' They found the Department to be 'at the forefront of interdisciplinary critical legal studies in Canada and more globally as well.'

Faculty

The external reviewers' shared no concerns regarding the quality of the Department, its faculty or the programs offered. They were particularly impressed by 'the commitment of such a critical mass of faculty members to student mentoring, and impression reinforced by the students.

Students

The external reviewers noted that 'the program draws on the methods and traditions of a number of scholarly disciplines and aims to prepare students to become informed citizens who are prepared to meaningfully practice in the political, social, and economic life of their communities.'

Curriculum

The external reviewers noted that "the Department is very conscientious with regard to monitoring and assessing the overall quality of the programs in addition to the cyclical program review." The external reviewers "found nothing of great concern regarding the appropriateness of the Department's programs or the requirement needed to meet their objectives and program-level learning outcomes." They applauded the Department's desire to keep enrollment at 4000 level at an acceptable level (25 students), provide seminar styled modes of delivery, and offer innovative courses.

Opportunities for program improvement and enhancement

The External Reviewers' Report made 8 recommendations for improvement:

1. Hire indigenous faculty. (concern)
2. Maintain a minimal faculty cohort that allows the Department to maintain small fourth year class sizes, among other things. 21 seems too low. (concern)
3. Provide adequate administrative staff and faculty support as it relates to experiential learning: at least one of a Teaching- Stream faculty position or an administrative support position seems necessary. (concern)
4. Maintain a minimal CI cohort so as not to lose the 'capital advantage' of the programs. (concern)
5. Ensure that the Department has access to data regarding graduates so as to enable information gathering and communication with said graduates. (weakness)

6. Think through purpose and modalities of the M.A. program, including what it is possible to do with summer terms and the professional orientation of the program, as well as its catering to part-time students. (concern)
7. Serious consultation is needed with administrative staff, especially before any roll-out of new processes- and their protection is needed of their ability to work off site (so as to have uninterrupted, concentrated work time). (concern and opportunity)
8. Maintain minimal funding to hold events that foster intellectual community and maintain morale and organizational culture. (concern)

The Outcome of the Review

As a consequence of the review, the graduate and undergraduate programs in Law and Legal 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 Chair of Department of Law and Legal Studies and the Dean of the Faculty of Public and Global Affairs in responses to the External Reviewers' report and Implementation Plan that was considered by SQAPC on April 23, 2026. The Department agreed unconditionally to recommendation #6, and agreed in principle to recommendation #5 and 7. They also agreed to recommendations #1, 2, 3, 4, and 8 if resources permit.

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 30, 2027.

The Next Cyclical Review

The next cyclical review of the graduate and undergraduate programs in Law and Legal Studies will be conducted during the 2029-30 year.

Law and Legal 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.

The Department of Law and Legal Studies was pleased to receive the External Reviewers' very positive report on December 8, 2025. The report was shared with our faculty and staff, and we remain committed to the continual improvement of our programs to enhance the student, staff, and faculty experience.

This document includes both our response to the External Reviewers' Report and an accompanying Action Plan, developed in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty of Public and Global Affairs.

The department is grateful that the reviewers recognized our strong commitment to "rigorous critical inquiry and interdisciplinary teaching." We also appreciate their acknowledgment of the department's significance as the largest law and legal studies program in Canada.

The reviewers' recommendations for program enhancement focus primarily on restoring departmental resources to the levels present during the previous cyclical program review. They noted the impacts of recent budgetary and enrollment challenges and recognized that, although we have experienced some enrollment declines, our department continues to serve the largest number of students within the Faculty of Public and Global Affairs. The importance of this role needs to be reflected in a restoration of our faculty and contract instructor complement to a level that enables us to fully support the mission and significance of the department.

Importantly, the reviewers also noted that the vast majority of the recommended program enhancements cannot be implemented without meaningful support from the University and the Dean's Office. Only one recommendation requires the department to consider an internal program change; others will require renewed financial and structural support in order to be achieved. The department hopes that the University will take seriously the reviewers' call to properly support the Department of Law and Legal Studies so that we may continue to fulfill our academic mission.

We are also grateful that the reviewers recognized that the challenges facing the department are largely the result of external factors. With appropriate institutional support and thoughtful management of these pressures, the University can help restore the department and its programs to the prominent place they occupy within the law and legal studies community in Canada.

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: Bachelor of Arts, Law (B.A., B.A. Honours, B.A. Honours Combined)

Specialization in Global Law and Social Justice B.G.In.S. Honours

Stream in Global Law and Social Justice B.G.In.S.

Master of Arts, Legal Studies

Doctor of Philosophy, Legal Studies

Prepared by (name/position/unit/date): Zeina Bou-Zeid, Department Chair

January 28, 2026

<p>External Reviewer Recommendation & Categorization</p> <p>Note: Recommendations highlighted in yellow were also made as part of a previous review</p>	<p>Unit Response (choose only one for each recommendation):</p> <p>1- Agreed to unconditionally 2- Agreed to if additional resources permit (describe resources) 3- Agreed to in principle 4- Not agreed to</p> <p>Rationales are required for categories 2, 3 & 4</p>	<p>Action Item</p>	<p>Owner</p>	<p>Timeline</p>	<p>Will the action described require calendar changes? (Y or N)</p>
<p>1) Hire Indigenous faculty. (concern)</p>	<p><i>Agreed to if additional resources permit</i></p>	<p>The Department welcomes and strongly supports the recommendation to hire Indigenous faculty. Meaningful progress toward Indigenizing our curriculum, pedagogy, and student support systems cannot be achieved without increasing Indigenous representation among our full-time academic staff. This is particularly urgent given that the department has recently lost two faculty members whose departures have created significant gaps in our ability to meet existing teaching, service, and program obligations.</p>	<p><i>University, Dean, Department</i></p>	<p><i>2 to 4 years</i></p>	<p>N</p>

		<p><u>Action to be Taken:</u> 1. Submit a hiring request through the Dean's Office to replace recent faculty departures with one to two Indigenous hires. 2. Engage with the Office of Equity and Inclusive Communities to ensure best practices in recruitment, outreach, and support for Indigenous candidates. 3. If a position is approved by the University, Faculty to develop a recruitment strategy that includes outreach to Indigenous scholars, communities, and networks. 4. Ensure Departmental readiness by confirming that departmental policies, mentorship practices, and supports are aligned with the needs of incoming Indigenous faculty members.</p>			
<p>2) Maintain a minimal faculty cohort that allows the Department to maintain small fourth-year class sizes, among other things. 32 seems too low (see p.24 of Workbook). (concern)</p>	<p><i>Agreed to if additional resources permit</i></p>	<p>The Department agrees that our current faculty complement is too low to sustain program quality and meet student demand. A decline from 37.5 to 31.5 faculty members, combined with reductions in contract instructor support, has limited our ability to offer required courses, maintain class sizes, and support high-demand areas. Restoring our faculty complement must be treated as a priority.</p> <p><u>Action to be Taken:</u> 1. Submit a formal request through the Dean's Office to restore the departmental complement to its previous level of 37.5 FTE over the</p>	<p><i>University, Dean, Department</i></p>	<p><i>2 to 10 years</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>

		<p>next ten years. The department recognizes that any future faculty hiring is contingent upon increases in student enrollment. While undergraduate enrollment has declined over the past eight years, we did experience a small but encouraging increase in first-year enrollments in 2025–26.</p> <p>2. Provide updated workload and enrollment data to the Dean to demonstrate the need for restoration of faculty positions. 3. Develop a multi-year hiring plan that supports sustainable growth in key teaching areas and addresses long-term enrollment pressures.</p>			
<p>3) Provide adequate administrative staff and faculty support as it relates to experiential learning: at least one of a Teaching-Stream faculty position or an administrative support position seems necessary. (concern)</p>	<p><i>Agreed to if additional resources permit</i></p>	<p>The Department agrees with the reviewers that strong support for experiential learning is urgently needed. The loss of the staff member who previously coordinated experiential learning has created a significant gap, requiring existing staff and faculty to take on the development and administration of internships and other EL opportunities in addition to their regular duties. This is not sustainable. The Department’s recent request for a teaching-stream faculty position dedicated to experiential learning was unsuccessful. Without this support, our ability to maintain, let alone</p>	<p><i>University, Dean, Department</i></p>	<p><i>2 years</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>

		<p>expand, EL opportunities is severely limited.</p> <p><u>Action to be Taken:</u> 1. Consult with the Dean's Office to confirm the urgent need for dedicated experiential learning support and to identify the most feasible path forward (staff position, teaching-stream faculty role, faculty course reduction). 2. Prepare a hiring plan and job description outlining the responsibilities, required qualifications, and workload distribution for either a staff EL coordinator or a faculty position. 3. Develop a report demonstrating current gaps, the impact of the loss of previous EL support, and the demand for internships and community-engaged learning. 4. Collaborate with experiential learning units to clarify available supports and sharing of resources. 5. Rebalance internal workloads once the position is approved, shifting EL coordination away from already overextended staff and faculty. 6. Create a departmental EL strategy that can be implemented once support is secured, including partnership development, internship oversight, and student placement processes.</p>			
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<p>4) Maintain a minimal CI cohort so as not to lose the “Capital Advantage” of the programs. (concern)</p>	<p><i>Agreed to if additional resources permit</i></p>	<p>The Department agrees that maintaining a stable cohort of CIs is essential. CIs bring valuable practice-informed learning and community-based experience that enriches student learning, diversify perspectives, and strengthen our teaching. This loss has reduced course diversity, limited scheduling flexibility, increased class sizes, and weakened our ability to connect academic learning with real-world legal and policy contexts. Preserving current CI levels and, in time, restoring CI resources to their former capacity are necessary steps to uphold program quality and effectively respond to student demand.</p> <p><u>Action to be Taken:</u> 1. Consult with the Dean’s Office to develop a 2027–28 CI budget proposal that restores CI resources to a sustainable level aligned with program needs. The proposal should draw on evidence of enrollment pressures, course access challenges, and the significant decline in CI allocations over the past five years to justify the required increase. The department acknowledges that any expansion of CI hiring is contingent on growth in student enrollment. While undergraduate enrollment has declined over the past eight years, the modest increase in first-year enrollment in 2025–26 is an encouraging indicator</p>	<p><i>Dean, Department</i></p>	<p><i>2 to 5 years</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>
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		2. Work with the Dean's Office to explore multi-year CI funding commitments that prevent year-to-year volatility.			
5) Ensure that the Department has access to data regarding graduates so as to enable information gathering and communication with said graduates. (weakness)	<i>Agreed to in principle</i>	<p>The Department agrees that improved access to alumni data is essential. Current restrictions from the Department of University Advancement prevent us from directly contacting graduates or surveying them about career outcomes. As a result, we lack information that would help us understand alumni trajectories, support recruitment efforts, and align our programs with employer needs.</p> <p><u>Action to be Taken:</u> 1. Work with the Dean's Office to formally request improved access to alumni data currently held by the Office of University Advancement. 2. Establish a regular communication process with Advancement to ensure that alumni employment and career outcome data collected by the University is shared with the Department in a timely, appropriate manner. 3. Develop a coordinated plan with the Dean's Office and Advancement to allow the Department to send approved communications or surveys to alumni through existing University channels.</p>	<i>Department of University Advancement, Department</i>	<i>2 years</i>	<i>N</i>

<p>6) Think through the purpose and modalities of the M.A. program, including what it is possible to do with summer terms and the professional orientation of the program, as well as its catering to part-time students. (concern)</p>	<p><i>Agreed to Unconditionally</i></p>	<p>The Department agrees with the recommendation to review the modalities of our MA program, including the possibility of summer courses and the program’s professional orientation. We have already begun exploring possibilities for revising the program to better serve the diverse needs of our graduate students. Initial consultations have taken place within the Graduate Committee and with the full faculty at the departmental retreat.</p> <p><u>Action to be Taken:</u> The Department will continue this work and will move forward with formal revisions once the Board has provided its approval.</p>	<p><i>Department</i></p>	<p><i>Ongoing</i></p>	<p><i>Y</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>-course additions/deletions</i> <i>-restructuring of MA graduation timeline</i> <i>-deletion/changes to three fields of study</i>
<p>7) Serious consultation is needed with administrative staff, especially before any roll-out of new processes - and protection is needed of their ability to work off-site (so as to have uninterrupted, concentrated work time). (concern and weakness)</p>	<p><i>Agreed to in principle</i></p>	<p>The Department agrees that administrative staff must be consulted in advance of any new or revised administrative processes. Although many processes originate and are mandated at the Faculty or University level—and therefore fall outside departmental control—the Department is committed to ensuring that any changes within departmental purview are implemented only after meaningful administrative input.</p> <p>The Department fully supports administrative staff being able to work off-site—at least two days per week—as part of their flexible work arrangements. While the authority to approve hybrid</p>	<p><i>University, Dean, Department</i></p>	<p><i>1 year</i></p>	<p><i>N</i></p>

		<p>work schedules sits with the Dean's Office, the Department remains committed to sustaining and endorsing these arrangements.</p> <p><u>Action to be Taken:</u> 1. When process changes originate from the Faculty or University, the department will formally communicate the importance of administrative consultation in design and implementation. 2. The Chair will formally reiterate the Department's support for hybrid work arrangements to the Dean's Office. 3. The Department will maintain predictable remote days for staff whenever possible.</p>			
8) Maintain minimal funding to hold events that foster intellectual community and maintain morale and organizational culture. (concern)	<i>Agreed to if additional resources permit</i>	The Department fully agrees with the reviewers that maintaining dedicated funding for events that foster intellectual community is essential. Continued support at current funding levels allows us to host academic and social events that enrich the undergraduate and graduate student experience, highlight the intellectual diversity of our faculty, and strengthen our internal academic culture. These events also enhance the Department's external presence by showcasing an active and engaging scholarly community to prospective students who interact with our website and social media platforms. Sustaining this funding is therefore crucial to	<i>Dean, Department</i>	<i>1 year</i>	<i>N</i>

		<p>supporting student engagement, promoting faculty research, and maintaining the visibility and vibrancy of the Department.</p> <p><u>Action to be Taken:</u> 1. Consult with the Dean’s Office to advocate for maintaining current event-funding levels as a baseline requirement for departmental academic life. 2. Share the annual events plan with the Dean’s Office, highlighting key academic talks, workshops, student-focused events, and community-building activities to demonstrate ongoing value. 3. Maintain the current Assistant to the Chair and Communications Coordinator position, recognizing that this role provides essential support for event planning, coordination, and communication. 4. Collaborate with the Department of University Advancement to pursue external fundraising opportunities. Consult with external partners—including law firms—to secure financial support for collaborative events. 5. Continue to communicate departmental events to the Dean’s Office, other Faculties, external community partners, and current and prospective students—ensuring they are promoted through all available channels, including the Department’s website and social media.</p>			
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