

**SENATE QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PLANNING COMMITTEE**  
**Cyclical Review of the graduate and undergraduate programs in Women's and Gender 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 Women's and Gender 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 Women's and Gender Studies reside in the Feminist Institute for Social Transformation, 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 Feminist Institute for Social Transformation 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 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025.

## FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

### Introduction

The graduate and undergraduate programs in Women's and Gender Studies reside in the Feminist Institute for Social Transformation, 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 January 14-15, 2025, was conducted by Dr. Leonora Angeles from University of British Columbia, and Dr. Jane Ku, University of Windsor. The site visit involved formal meetings with the Vice-Provost (Academic and Global Learning), the Associate Vice-President (Academic Programs and Strategic Initiatives), the Associate Dean (Faculty Affairs) of the Faculty of the Arts and Social Sciences, the Vice-Provost (Graduate Studies), and the Director of Feminist Institute for Social Transformation. The review committee also met with faculty members, staff, and undergraduate and graduate students.

The External Reviewers' report, February 11<sup>th</sup>, 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 Feminist Institute for Social Transformation (Appendix A)
- The Report of the External Review Committee (Appendix B).
- The response and implementation plan from the Feminist Institute for Social Transformation (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 Feminist Institute for Social Transformation 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]here is consensus among administrators, faculty, staff, undergraduate and graduate students we have interviewed for this Cyclical Program Review that the Feminist Institute for Social Transformation (FIST) has a very good reputation on campus and a prominent identity in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS) as a centre for feminist activist research and teaching social justice and critical perspectives in the humanities, social sciences, and applied fields" (p.2).

#### *Faculty*

Speaking with regard to faculty, the external reviewers' stated: "With respect to teaching, this unit is well represented by faculty members who have been nominated and received teaching awards at the University. Faculty members provide many opportunities for training and mentoring students through their research grants as several members received external funding not only from SSHRC but also other foundations and granting agencies (Women's and Gender Equality Grant)" (p. 13).

#### *Curriculum*

The external reviewers noted that the "course syllabi we examined show current and cutting-edge state of interdisciplinary feminist studies, as well as effective and appropriate pedagogical modes of delivery to facilitate student learning of knowledge, skills, values, abilities and attitudes consistent with the program learning outcomes. There was a good variety and range of assignment types – including essay writing, memes, podcasting, research proposal development, journaling, reflection papers, reading responses, film criticism, group discussion, oral presentations, etc." (p. 4).

### **Opportunities for program improvement and enhancement**

The External Reviewers' Report made 7 recommendations for improvement:

1. Provide adequate internal (FIST) and external (FASS, CU) support for junior faculty mentoring by consistently assigning well-matched internal and external faculty mentors at various stages of the career ladder to ensure success in research grants, publication, teaching excellence, and securing tenure and promotion (Weakness and Concern)
2. Hire at least three new Research Stream faculty members with specialization in a combination of Critical Disability, Critical Race, Critical Sexualities, Critical Indigenous and Critical Global Studies in order to develop Major Programs and graduate research specialization in these growth areas, including the potential development of a PhD in Feminist Studies in the future as more FIST faculty gain seniority. If the faculty hiring freeze policy has to continue, consider ways of attracting Teaching Post-Doctoral Fellows funded by the University and external sources (e.g. Killam, Banting, SSHRC) to augment FIST's declining teaching capacity (Weakness/Concern/Opportunity).
3. Connect undergraduate and graduate student recruitment to public education, community-building and social events, and alumni engagement opportunities that could also bring in notable FIST-FASSCU alumni as classroom or seminar, guest speakers, student mentors,

- student internship or practicum hosts, and philanthropic donors to increase the number and size of student awards and scholarships (Opportunity).
4. Articulate more clearly a) the identity (“brand”) of the MA program, b) the MA Program learning outcomes distinct from the undergraduate programs, c) the streams to which students are admitted based on admitted students’ preparation and career goals; possibly, rename the streams (course-based as Applied Professional Stream, essay and thesis-based as Research Streams geared towards PhD and interdisciplinary careers), and d) the specializations parallel to the undergraduate Minor Programs (Weakness/Concern/Opportunity).
  5. Assign Pro Temp MA program and research supervisors to MA students at the time of admission to enable early conversations about program expectations, SSHRC and other scholarship applications, potential GRA hiring match, and graduate student life at FIST and Carleton (Concern and Opportunity).
  6. Protect the identity and integrity of FIST as an academic unit; cultivate the growth of bottom-up, grassroots, faculty-level conversations about any type or form of institutional restructuring (e.g. merger, clustering, amalgamation, etc.) that concerns the future of FIST within FASS in order to avoid any presumptive discourses or top-down directives; this will create lasting local ownership over any restructuring decisions (Concern).
  7. Provide more opportunities for a fuller and richer engagement in/with the university and FIST for both undergraduate and graduate students (Concern and Opportunity).

### **The Outcome of the Review**

As a consequence of the review, the graduate and undergraduate programs in Women’s and Gender 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 Feminist Institute for Social Transformation 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 November 13<sup>th</sup>, 2025. The Institute agreed unconditionally to recommendations # 1; #4 a) and b); #5, and agreed in principle to recommendations #6 and #7. They also agreed to recommendations #2 and #3 while noting that additional resources could help facilitate these recommendations. The unit did not agree to recommendations #4 c) and d), 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 30<sup>th</sup>, 2027.

### **The Next Cyclical Review**

The next cyclical review of the graduate and undergraduate programs in Women’s and Gender Studies will be conducted during the 29-30 academic year.

**Women's and Gender Studies**  
**Unit Response to External Reviewers' Report & Implementation Plan**  
**Programs Being Reviewed: Undergraduate and Graduate (MA) 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 Feminist Institute of Social Transformation was pleased to receive the Reviewers' very positive External Reviewers' report on Tuesday 4 March 2025. This report was shared with our faculty and staff, and we met on Wednesday 2 April 2025 to discuss the responses to the External Reviewers' Report and an Implementation Plan (Section B). We are committed to the continual improvement of our programs to enhance the student, staff, and faculty experience.

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: Women's and Gender Studies

Prepared by (name/position/unit/date): Dr. Amrita Hari, Director of Feminist Institution of Social Transformation, April 11, 2025.

<p>External Reviewer Recommendation &amp; 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 &amp; 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) Provide adequate internal (FIST) and external (FASS, CU) support for junior faculty mentoring by consistently assigning well-matched internal and external faculty mentors at various stages of the career ladder to ensure success in research grants, publication, teaching excellence, and securing tenure and promotion.</p> <p><b>Weakness &amp; Concern</b></p>	<p>Agreed to unconditionally</p>	<p>At present, FIST is not expecting to have any new hiring requests approved. We have one junior faculty who will be applying for tenure in the 2025-2026 academic year. The faculty member and Director are working closely to support their tenure and promotion application over Summer 2025. Going forward, the Institute Director along with ODFASS will work to identify appropriate mentors for incoming junior faculty, if they arrive, and draw on the long list of cross-listed faculty to locate the best match.</p>	<p>FIST Director Dean</p>	<p>Pre-Tenure Faculty Member mentoring for application for tenure and promotion will occur in Summer 2025, with the mandatory annual review scheduled for May 12.</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>2) Hire at least three new Research Stream faculty members with specialization in a combination of Critical Disability, Critical Race, Critical Sexualities, Critical Indigenous and Critical Global Studies in order to develop Major Programs and graduate research specialization in these growth areas, including the potential development of a PhD in Feminist Studies in the future as more FIST faculty gain seniority. If the faculty hiring freeze policy has to continue, consider ways of attracting Teaching Post-</p>	<p>Agreed to if additional resources permit</p>	<p>We agree wholeheartedly with the recommendation to hire at least three new research-stream faculty to support a higher number of graduate students in our MA program, teaching, and research. This request would need resources from ODFASS and the appropriate resource planning bodies. We will make submissions to the Dean requesting hires whenever we are given</p>	<p>FIST Director Dean</p>	<p>FIST is amid a leadership transition to be completed July 1, 2025. The new director will have the necessary discussions with</p>	<p>N</p>

<p>Doctoral Fellows funded by the University and external sources (e.g. Killam, Banting, SSHRC) to augment FIST's declining teaching capacity.</p> <p><b>Weakness, Concern &amp; Opportunity</b></p>		<p>the opportunity as the possibility of new positions becomes available.</p> <p>FIST does not support the creation of a PhD program in Feminist Studies due to the current economic climate and general hiring freeze in the academic, not-for-profit, and government sectors, which are the sectors our MA students find work. Although we welcome external sources of support as suggested by the reviewers, the small number of faculty do not have the capacity to recruit actively. Moreover, there are concerns with drawing on already precariously employed academics to meet our needs. We are currently waiting to hear the results of an application to SSHRC for a postdoctoral fellowship in FIST, to work with Dr. Manjeet Birk. We will continue to support these kinds of applications whenever possible.</p>		<p>the Dean of FASS in Fall 2025.</p>	
<p>3) Connect undergraduate and graduate student recruitment to public education, community-building and social events, and alumni engagement opportunities that could also bring in notable FIST-FASS-CU alumni as classroom or seminar, guest speakers, student mentors, student internship or practicum hosts, and philanthropic donors to increase the number and size of student awards and scholarships.</p> <p><b>Opportunity</b></p>	<p>Agreed to if additional resources permit</p>	<p>The Director and Graduate and Undergraduate Advisor in FIST (The Executive) is currently working with Carleton University Advancement to administer a new donor award for graduate students. This form of recruitment and public education cannot be completed without faculty and staff champions who require time releases and other supports. Moreover, there is a significant drop in our carry-forward and unit funds to organize events that could connect more students to alumni mentors and donors.</p>	<p>Graduate and Undergraduate Advisor</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N</p>

		<p>The graduate and undergraduate advisor is currently working with recruitment to make FIST the focus at faculty and university recruitment events. In terms of community building events, our unit is discussing options for hosting events that do not require significant (or any) budget, including inviting local speakers only.</p>			
<p>4) Articulate more clearly a) the identity (“brand”) of the MA program, b) the MA Program learning outcomes distinct from the undergraduate programs, c) the streams to which students are admitted based on admitted students’ preparation and career goals; possibly, rename the streams (course-based as Applied Professional Stream, essay and thesis-based as Research Streams geared towards PhD and interdisciplinary careers), and d) the specializations parallel to the undergraduate Minor Programs.</p> <p><b>Weakness, Concern &amp; Opportunity</b></p>	<p>A. Agreed to unconditionally  B. Agreed to unconditionally  C. Not agreed to  D. Not agreed to</p>	<p>a) Update website to make it clear what the MA program offers and revise relevant portions of the program description.</p> <p>b) Carry-out student surveys, which are already proposed as part of our review plans between cycles, to revise the learning outcomes in advance of the next cyclical program review.</p> <p>c) After a substantive discussion of all three streams of the current MA program, FIST feels strongly that all three streams are research-based, and any of the streams lead to any number of professional outcomes. Any subsequent name change of the MA streams or revisions to the stream descriptions will reflect the research-based nature of all three streams. Additionally, we will address the stigma attached to the coursework stream in orientation and in the core courses to ensure that it is not viewed as a “fail out option”. We welcome discussions with the vice provost of graduate studies</p>	<p>A. Graduate and Undergraduate Director and Part-Time Administrative Assistant.</p> <p>B. Director, Departmental Administrator, Curriculum Committee</p> <p>C. Director and Graduate and Undergraduate Advisor</p>	<p>A. Fall/Winter 2025-2026</p> <p>B. 2025-2026 and 2028-2029 and to the graduate program in 2026-2027 and 2029-2030</p> <p>C. Fall/Winter 2026-2027 after completion of first survey for graduate students.</p>	<p>Y</p>

		<p>about options for promoting the coursework stream specifically.</p> <p>d) We do not agree with aligning the specializations with the UG minor programs because we don't have the resources or capacity for this. Moreover, FIST wishes to keep the MA program intersectional, without siloing students. We have designed the MA program to match the core philosophies of WGST1808, which is celebrated by the reviewers.</p>			
<p>5) Assign Pro Temp MA program and research supervisors to MA students at the time of admission to enable early conversations about program expectations, SSHRC and other scholarship applications, potential GRA hiring match, and graduate student life at the Feminist Institute for Social Transformation (FIST) and Carleton.</p> <p><b>Concern &amp; Opportunity</b></p>	<p>Agreed to unconditionally</p>	<p>The Graduate and Undergraduate Advisor will assign a mentor for incoming MA students to support them in learning about the program expectations, facilitate scholarship and other funding applications, increase the potential for graduate research assistantships, and generally support them to make the most of graduate student life in FIST.</p>	<p>Graduate and Undergraduate Advisor</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N</p>
<p>6) Protect the identity and integrity of FIST as an academic unit; cultivate the growth of bottom-up, grassroots, faculty-level conversations about any type or form of institutional restructuring (e.g. merger, clustering, amalgamation, etc.) that concerns the future of FIST within FASS in order to avoid any presumptive discourses or top-down directives; this will create lasting local ownership over any restructuring decisions.</p> <p><b>Concern</b></p>	<p>Agreed to in principle</p>	<p>At present, discussions of restructuring are occurring on a unit-by-unit basis. FIST has been consulted re: potential staffing changes, which is currently underway and involves conversations with the affected staff.</p>	<p>FIST Director and Dean</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N</p>

<p>7) Provide more opportunities for a fuller and richer engagement in/with the university and FIST for both undergraduate and graduate students.</p> <p><b>Concern &amp; Opportunity</b></p>	<p>Agreed to in principle</p>	<p>We will continue the activities that have been viewed favorably by the external reviewers, including our annual student conference. In addition, FIST will: a) revise its orientation program to invite 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> year undergraduate students; b) organize informal pizza lunches at least once a semester for all Majors and Minors in our programs; c) continue our “coffee and doughnuts” with MA students from all cohorts; d) involve the Womyn's Support Centre as part of these activities, just as we have with the Graduate Students Association, the Carleton University Students Association, and CUPE4600.</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>N</p>
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