

SENATE QUALITY ASSURANCE AND PLANNING COMMITTEE
Cyclical Review of the graduate programs in International Affairs
Executive Summary and Final Assessment Report

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The graduate programs in International Affairs reside in the Norman Patterson School of International Affairs, 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 Director of the Norman Patterson School of International Affairs and the Associate 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 May 28th, 2026.

FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT

Introduction

The graduate programs in International Affairs reside in the Norman Patterson School of International Affairs, 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 28-29th, 2025, was conducted by Dr. Ann Fitz-Gerald from Wilfrid Laurier University, and Dr. Michele Rioux from the Université du Québec à Montréal. 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 of the Faculty of Public and Global Affairs and the Director of the Norman Patterson School of International Affairs. The review committee also met with faculty members, staff, 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 Norman Patterson School of International Affairs (Appendix A).
- The Report of the External Review Committee (Appendix B).
- The response and implementation plan from the Norman Patterson School of International Affairs (Appendix C).
- The Response from the Associate 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 Director of the Norman Patterson School of International Affairs and agreed to by the Associate 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' Report states that Carleton is 'the top school in Canada in International Affairs and it has demonstrated its value for students and partners over the last 60 years,' and praises its strong reputation in attracting students local and internationally.

Faculty

Speaking with regard to faculty, the external reviewers' stated:

"NPSIA clearly has a sufficient number of qualified core faculty who are competent to teach and/or supervise, achieve the goals of the program, and foster the appropriate academic environment. NPSIA hosts a highly qualified core faculty with outstanding reputations." "NPSIA faculty have the recent research or professional/clinical expertise needed to foster an appropriate intellectual climate, sustain the program, and promote innovation."

Students

The external reviewers noted that "the research output of the core NPSIA faculty; the success of financial awards and grant applications that both NPSIA faculty and students attract; and the students' support for the high quality teaching which NPSIA faculty offers - is indicative of the sheer strength and reputation of this program."

Curriculum

The external reviewers attested to 'the effectiveness of the methods of assessing student achievement through degree level expectations.'

Opportunities for program improvement and enhancement

The External Reviewers' Report made 12 for improvement:

1) Engage in discussions with the University to reconsider having a College of Global Studies at the same time as having a nationally and globally reputable "NPSIA" brand. Bridging the international undergraduate stream(s) under NPSIA would not only avoid the risk of external confusion (and potential brand dilution), but would provide an undergraduate revenue stream which is important for NPSIA under the current provincial funding model, and leverage the NPSIA brand to bolster undergraduate enrolment. This recommendation would also justify bolstering important administrative support to the program.

2) Consider reducing the number of scholarships and studentships - NPSIA's strong reputation will attract strong domestic and international students without the offer of a funding package. It is not necessary to give something of strong value 'away'. A small number of scholarships

should be given to a top tier of students which will help bring even more rigour to an already rigorous program. This will also address issues concerning revenue retention.

3) Use the forthcoming 60th anniversary of the School to leverage support and projection for a number of opportunities: the launch and announcement of the NPSIA Strategic Plan; the announcement of institutional growth in the form of an undergraduate program; and an appeal to the alumni, fellows and wider stakeholders for contributions to the new strategic direction (i.e. perhaps ask everyone to scan a QR code on a screen which presents 5-6 potential areas of contribution or support that guests can commit to by checking the box beside it). The anniversary offers an enormous opportunity to generate excitement and commitment.

4) The School currently does not have a strategic plan. It should develop its own strategic plan which is in line with the reflections of the University concerning 'internationalization' as a strategic priority. The strategy should be developed in close consultation with faculty, fellows and staff, and be ratified by the Faculty Council. While we live in a very fluid environment, a 'mid-term' review of a 5-year plan could offer an opportunity to make adjustments, or include more ambitious milestones, etc.

5) The School should retain a PhD program but closely align the PhD program with the research mission. This would help develop future faculty, support the development of professional PhD graduates, and increase co-authored research output.

6) Develop more regular and structured communication channels between the Dean and Head of School; Head of School and faculty; and students and School in order to build greater transparency in planning and decision-making. Scheduled meetings between the Dean and Director of the School which are followed by Faculty Council meetings - which have structured agenda and which include matters arising from the previous meeting to encourage follow-up and actions - should be considered.

7) Introduce an online Masters program which builds on good practice (i.e. platform, design, portals, etc) from Carleton's online MBA program. The online variant of the Masters program will be attractive to those keen to maintain employment in parallel with the pursuit of personal development goals. The program could also be announced – and attract good media coverage – around the 60th anniversary celebration.

8) Where possible, and in line with preserving the strength of the NPSIA graduate program brand, restrict undergraduate students from registering in Masters level courses.

9) As part of the development of an undergraduate stream in the School, the School should also consider offering an accelerated program which bridges the undergraduate experience with the NPSIA Masters program, offering the ability to complete an undergraduate degree in three years based on a minimum number of required courses and academic performance level.

10) Consider holding a "boot camp" for students requiring minimum levels of knowledge in areas such as economics and international relations in late August in order to provide space to offer professional development courses (meeting the government's demand for "skillsets") during the academic year.

11) Consider surveying the students to learn more about knowledge areas that former contract lecturers may have supported, which are no longer offered as accredited courses. Survey feedback on these areas of knowledge could be used to inform the development of an “Enhanced Knowledge in International Affairs” program – which could earn students a meaningful certificate of participation which could be included on LinkedIn profiles, and which could also be open to alumni living in the Ottawa areas. This could be an effective way of keeping more popular contract lecturers – and Fellows – engaged in the School’s activities.

12) The School should build partnerships with 5-6 other global institutions (to start with), which could be further expanded with each year. These partnerships could support the university’s internationalization strategy, create overseas opportunities for the students, have the potential to evolve into dual degree programs and offer a platform for international student recruitment efforts.

The Outcome of the Review

As a consequence of the review, the graduate programs in International Affairs 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 Norman Patterson School of International Affairs and the Associate 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 May 28th, 2026. The School agreed unconditionally to recommendations #2, 3, 6, 7, 9, and agreed in principle to recommendations #8, 10, and 12. They also agreed to recommendations #4 and 11 while noting that additional resources could help facilitate these recommendations. The unit did not agree to recommendations #1 and 5, 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, 2028.

The Next Cyclical Review

The next cyclical review of the graduate programs in International Affairs will be conducted during the 2030-31 academic year.

**Norman Paterson School of International Affairs
Unit Response to External Reviewers' Report & Implementation Plan
Programs Being Reviewed: 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.

NPSIA was pleased to receive the External Reviewers' report on December 9, 2025. The report was shared with NPSIA faculty and staff, and they were asked to submit their comments to the Director. The report and comments received were then discussed at NPSIA's Board meeting. The unit response and implementation plan that follows below reflect the comments received and the NPSIA Board discussion. NPSIA is committed to the continual improvement of its graduate 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 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: NPSIA MA and PhD Programs

Prepared by (name/position/unit/date): Yiagadeesen (Teddy) Samy, Director, NPSIA, January 28, 2026

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) Engage in discussions with the University to reconsider having a College of Global Studies at the same time as having a nationally and globally reputable “NPSIA” brand. Bridging the international undergraduate stream(s) under NPSIA would not only avoid the risk of external confusion (and potential brand dilution), but would provide an undergraduate revenue stream which is important for NPSIA under the current provincial funding model, and leverage the NPSIA brand to bolster undergraduate enrolment. This recommendation would also justify bolstering important administrative support to the program. (concern/ opportunity)	4 – Not agreed to While the creation of a College of Global Studies may cause confusion, NPSIA’s reputation is also well established across Canada and beyond and we do not think it will be impacted as long as the University clearly differentiates the two. We also do not think that the timing is ideal to take on an undergraduate program right now. Focusing on an online MA program using a cost-recovery model makes more sense for the time being.				N
2) Consider reducing the number of scholarships and studentships -NPSIA’s strong reputation will attract strong domestic and international students without the offer of a funding package. It is not necessary to give something of strong value ‘away’. A small number of scholarships should be given to a top tier of students which will help bring even more rigour to an already rigorous	1 – Agreed to unconditionally We have already changed our funding model since last year due to the fiscal situation at the University and have thus reduced our overall funding envelope. At the same time, when making adjustments to our funding we need to be mindful of other Canadian programs that offer	Continue to make adjustments to our funding model. These adjustments are compensated by the fact that a new process of rolling admissions since last year has ensured that we make offers early and are thus able to attract a strong pool of students despite lower funding.	Associate Director in charge of admissions and recruitment; MA recruitment	Ongoing	N

program. This will also address issues concerning revenue retention. (concern)	more generous funding, while ensuring that we continue to attract the best students.		and program administrator		
3) Use the forthcoming 60th anniversary of the School to leverage support and projection for a number of opportunities: the launch and announcement of the NPSIA Strategic Plan; the announcement of institutional growth in the form of an undergraduate program; and an appeal to the alumni, fellows and wider stakeholders for contributions to the new strategic direction (i.e perhaps ask everyone to scan a QR code on a screen which presents 5-6 potential areas of contribution or support that guests can commit to by checking the box beside it). The anniversary offers an enormous opportunity to generate excitement and commitment. (opportunity)	1 – Agreed to unconditionally Plans are underway to celebrate NPSIA's 60th anniversary in Fall 2026. The main event will be held towards the end of September and will bring the entire NPSIA community together on campus for a panel discussion followed by a reception. We are working with University Advancement and our extensive alumni network to fundraise for a student experiential fund as a legacy piece for the 60th anniversary. The co-editors of NPSIA's <i>Canadian Foreign Policy Journal</i> will organize a conference in Fall 2026 for a special issue of the journal.	Ensure that the School leverages its 60 th anniversary to celebrate its accomplishments; fundraise for the student experiential fund; work with Advancement to identify donor opportunities.	University advancement and NPSIA alumni association; Director	2026	N
4) The School currently does not have a strategic plan. It should develop its own strategic plan which is in line with the reflections of the University concerning 'internationalization' as a strategic priority. The strategy should be developed in close consultation with faculty, fellows and staff, and be ratified by the Faculty Council. While we live in a very fluid environment, a 'mid-term' review of a 5-year plan could offer an opportunity to make adjustments, or include more ambitious milestones, etc.(concern)	2 – Agreed to if additional resources permit The possibility of developing a comprehensive strategic plan will be explored but this will likely require an investment of time and resources, which may be difficult in the current environment.	Instead of a full-fledged strategic plan, set up a Committee to think about strategic directions for the School and produce a succinct report (resources permitting), building on the recently completed self-study and external reviewers report. As the Director completes his last year in 2026-27, he will also leave behind a reflective piece about his 10 years as Director.	Strategic direction exercise to be led by Director.	2026-27	N

5) The School should retain a PhD program but closely align the PhD program with the research mission. This would help develop future faculty, support the development of professional PhD graduates, and increase co-authored research output. (opportunity)	4 – Not agreed to We do not think that it is necessary to align the PhD program more with the research mission since it is already a research intensive degree. Furthermore, the PhD program has already been streamlined to include a part-time option and to also help students focus on their dissertations earlier in order to reduce the timeline to completion. Comprehensive exams are no longer required and efforts have been made to steer the program towards a “professional” PhD program since most of our graduates are unlikely to compete for academic jobs. This aligns with our recognition that academic units do not typically hire “interdisciplinary” PhD graduates and that our graduates are much more likely to obtain non-academic jobs.				N
6) Develop more regular and structured communication channels between the Dean and Head of School; Head of School and faculty; and students and School in order to build greater transparency in planning and decision-making. Scheduled meetings between the Dean and Director of the School which are followed by Faculty Council meetings -which have structured agenda and which include matters arising from the previous meeting to encourage follow-up and actions -should be considered. (weakness)	1 – Agreed to unconditionally Director has had regular one on one meetings with the Dean, which are very helpful. NPSIA Board meetings (chaired by the Director, and including faculty, student reps and contract instructor reps) are held monthly during the Fall and Winter semesters. A faculty and staff retreat is also held typically in May. Both the Director and Associate Directors meet with student reps to discuss academic program-related issues.	Ensure that the practice of continuous communication between the Director and the Dean, holding Board meetings regularly, and regular communication with students, continue.	Director and Associate Directors (MA and PhD program).	Continued implementation.	N

7) Introduce an online Masters program which builds on good practice (i.e. platform, design, portals, etc) from Carleton's online MBA program. The online variant of the Masters program will be attractive to those keen to maintain employment in parallel with the pursuit of personal development goals. The program could also be announced –and attract good media coverage – around the 60 th anniversary celebration. (opportunity)	1 – Agreed to unconditionally An online master's program in Global Affairs (MGA) is currently in the works. We are hoping that it will be launched by early 2027.	Working with Carleton's Online Program Management partner and Carleton's Teaching and Learning Services (TLS), to develop the online Master's in Global Affairs (MGA) program.	Director; NPSIA curriculum committee; NPSIA faculty member who will serve as program coordinator; NPSIA faculty to assist with course development.	2026	Y
8) Where possible, and in line with preserving the strength of the NPSIA graduate program brand, restrict undergraduate students from registering in Masters level courses. (concern)	3 – Agreed to in principle This has typically been the practice over the years. However, the current fiscal situation together with low enrolment in some undergraduate courses that NPSIA offers for the BPAPM program has meant that we've had to offer combined 4 th /5 th year level courses with undergraduate and graduate students. It is not clear that this has negatively affected the NPSIA graduate program brand. It should be noted that 2025-26 is an exceptional year given a fairly "larger than normal" number of full-time faculty being on sabbatical.	Monitor the situation and solicit feedback from both faculty and students taking 4 th /5 th year classes.	Director; Associate Director (MA program);	2026	N
9) As part of the development of an undergraduate stream in the School, the School should also consider offering an accelerated program which bridges the undergraduate experience with the NPSIA Masters program, offering the ability to complete an undergraduate degree in three years based on a minimum number of required courses and academic performance level. (opportunity)	1 – Agreed to unconditionally Accelerated pathways for BGIInS and BPAPM students already exist and allow students to receive up to 1.0 credit in advanced standing towards the NPSIA MA program. These pathways are different from the recommendation but	Ensure that the accelerated pathway options are advertised better to undergraduate students in the BGIInS and BPAPM programs.	Associate Director (MA admissions and recruitment);	Continued implementation.	N

	achieve something fairly similar by allowing students to obtain the MA degree faster.				
10) Consider holding a “boot camp” for students requiring minimum levels of knowledge in areas such as economics and international relations in late August in order to provide space to offer professional development courses (meeting the government’s demand for “skillsets”) during the academic year. (opportunity)	3 – Agreed to in principle A special lecture on International Relations Theory for first year MA students was introduced last year, and students can also access the slides through Brightspace. Faculty teaching the graduate economics field courses tend to review basic economic concepts at the beginning of their classes but there is definitely scope to offer more “boot camps” in basic economics and statistics. Regarding professional development courses, see response to item 11 below.	Consider developing a Fall lecture that covers basic economic concepts (since students must take their required economics courses in the Winter), and that is similar to what has been developed for International Relations Theory.	Faculty teaching economics courses	2026-27	N.
11) Consider surveying the students to learn more about knowledge areas that former contract lecturers may have supported, which are no longer offered as accredited courses. Survey feedback on these areas of knowledge could be used to inform the development of an “Enhanced Knowledge in International Affairs” program –which could earn students a meaningful certificate of participation which could be included on LinkedIn profiles, and which could also be open to alumni living in the Ottawa areas. This could be an effective way of keeping more popular contract lecturers – and Fellows engaged in the School’s activities. (opportunity)	2 – Agreed to if additional resources permit This is not necessarily tied to what contract instructors would have taught but we agree that students would benefit from specific skillsets such as “monitoring and evaluation”, “using AI tools”, “using data visualization techniques”, “the policy drafting process” etc. that could be offered as 3-hour workshops and support their career development. Students would then receive a certificate of participation if they complete x number of workshops. Some of these workshops may require financial resources (e.g. delivered by external parties).	Survey students and draw on coop reports to find out what skillsets and knowledge students would benefit from during their time at NPSIA. Leverage expertise of NPSIA fellows if possible, or even consider offering some of these workshops by drawing on experts in the Ottawa region.	Director, Curriculum committee	As of 2026-27	N

12) The School should build partnerships with 5-6 other global institutions (to start with), which could be further expanded with each year. These partnerships could support the university's internationalization strategy, create overseas opportunities for the students, have the potential to evolve into dual degree programs and offer a platform for international student recruitment efforts (opportunity)	3 – Agreed to in principle NPSIA is currently in discussions with potential partners for the possibility of a dual degree program.	Continue discussions and work with the office of the Vice Provost (Academic and Global Learning) and Carleton International to explore other international partnership opportunities for dual degree programs.	Director	Continuous implementation.	Y
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