

CARLETON UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON QUALITY ASSURANCE

Cyclical Review of the Doctoral Program in Cultural Mediations

Executive Summary

This Executive Summary of the cyclical review of Carleton's doctoral program in Cultural Mediations is provided pursuant to articles 4.2.5-4.2.6 of the provincial Quality Assurance Framework and articles 5.1.9.23-24 and 5.1.9.26-27 of Carleton's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP).

Carleton University's doctoral program in Cultural Mediations is administered by the University's Institute for Comparative Studies in Literature, Art and Culture (ICSLAC), an academic unit in the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences (FASS).

As a consequence of the review, the program was categorised by the Carleton University Committee on Quality Assurance as being of good quality with international presence (Carleton's IQAP 5.1.9.12).

The program was judged to be strong overall, to meet if not exceed provincial, national and international standards with respect to learning outcomes and Graduate Degree Level Expectations, to be unique in its double-track approach which focuses both on developing breadth and capability in shared discourses about culture, as well as strength within the particular discipline of a student's specialization, and to have developed a unique strength in promoting interdisciplinary dialogue.

Opportunities for enhancement were identified with respect to securing the financial viability of the program, retaining at least one Canada Research Chair, two courses (CLMD 6900: Interdisciplinary Research Methods, and CLMD 6104: Issues of Subjectivity and Difference), the choice of course instructors, the appointment of at least one faculty member from the Department of Philosophy, mentoring first-year students, times-to-completion, second-language proficiency and the program's web site. A concern was expressed regarding the decline in the number of full-time equivalent faculty with substantive (i.e., more than a 0%) cross-appointments to the program.

The Action Plan agreed to by the program, the Dean of the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences and the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs addresses the concern regarding substantive faculty cross-appointments, and details initiatives to be implemented regarding the enhancements referred to above, together with timelines for completion. In reviewing the Plan, the Provost has requested a clearer focus and firmer timeline for Action item 2. Carleton's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP 5.4) provides for the monitoring of these initiatives.

**Ph.D. in Cultural Mediations (ICSLAC)
Cyclical Program Review
Action Plan**

The following action plan is based on the recommendations of the External Reviewers' Report of the Cultural Mediations PhD program. The recommendations are printed in **bold** followed by the departmental reply, the action to be taken, and a timeline.

1) The Review Committee strongly recommends that the current availability of 5.67 credits from cross appointed faculty of greater than 0% be sustained (including in the eventuality of upcoming retirements from faculty members currently appointed to Cultural Mediations at a percentage greater than 0). Moreover, a greater amount of available credits (greater than 5.67 — perhaps up to the 7.67 credits of 2008) from faculty members appointed at a greater percentage than 0 would be advisable to sustain the *effect* of critical mass in the program.

Reply: FASS is committed to maintaining the fiscal resources necessary to offer the Ph.D. program in Cultural Mediations. See memo from FASS Dean John Osborne, attached to this action plan.

2) That a ICSLAC/FASS task force investigate ways of securing the financial viability of Cultural Mediations and consider implications for either offering a number of undergraduate courses in the interdisciplinary areas of expertise found within the program and/or developing new areas for collaborative programs such as the recently launched Graduate Program in Digital Humanities, programs which would then be housed at ICSLAC. That this task force also consider the implications of broadening ICSLAC's intellectual mandate and fields of interest to include more squarely the social sciences, and investigate, along with the other players concerned, the feasibility of integrating the Institute for Interdisciplinary Studies and other interdisciplinary programs (Women Studies, Canadian Studies, etc.).

Reply: ICSLAC has already moved in this direction through the recent development of the graduate concentration in Digital Humanities and we anticipate that this initiative will be highly successful. The possibility of extending the Digital Humanities initiative to the undergraduate level has already been tentatively raised within ICSLAC and, if the MA concentration in the Digital Humanities is successful and additional resources and lab space can be secured, undergraduate course offerings in Digital Humanities might be possible, and highly advantageous to FASS and the University in the future. The possibility of offering an undergraduate course that helps fulfill the Arts and Culture requirement of the proposed Bachelor's degree in Global Studies has also been raised. It is too early to determine whether either of these initiatives might be feasible and the extent to which additional resources may be available.

However, the implications of integrating the Ph.D. program in Cultural Mediations with the range of other programs mentioned in the report – ranging from the undergraduate Institute of Interdisciplinary Studies program to the School of Canadian Studies – are unclear. Careful

consideration will need to be given not only to the interests of Cultural Mediations but also to the curricular needs and interests of the other units and to the distinctiveness of their programs before any kind of formal integration can be proposed. We must also give careful consideration to the increase in workload in the area of administrative duties with the development of any new programs.

Action: We will refer to the Cultural Mediations Steering Committee the possibility of setting up a task force (or a sub-committee) that will consider the implications of offering additional courses at the Masters and undergraduate levels. We will also investigate the possibilities of expanding our intellectual mandate to include a greater contribution from the social sciences: programs such as Anthropology and, outside of FASS, Communications, would appear to be most advantageous in this regard.

Timeline: The Steering Committee will consider this issue in the fall, 2013.

3) The Review Committee recommends that efforts be made to retain (or attract) at least 1 CRC scholar to Cultural Mediations, making sure that they be contractually appointed to the program at a greater percentage than 0%.

Reply: The presence of Canada Research Chairs has had a great impact on the Cultural Mediations program in terms of teaching, intellectual focus, the research profile of ICSLAC as a whole and, in addition, the recruitment, funding and research training of our students.

Action: The program will confer with the Office of the Vice-President, Research and International, the Dean of FASS, and other members of the upper administration, concerning how future CRC appointments might be made within FASS and the role Cultural Mediations might play in defining a possible research profile and cross appointment with another unit.

Timeline: In 2014-15, the Director will confer with the upper administration about the possibility of a CRC appointment to replace [REDACTED].

4) That the program revise the syllabus for CLMD 6900 and change the name of the course to reflect the current content.

Action: We have already made a submission to change the course title of CLMD 6900 from “Interdisciplinary Research Methods” to “Research and Professional Development.” This submission will include a new course description, which will better reflect the current role of the course in the program. We will refer to the Cultural Mediations Steering Committee the possibility of establishing specific guidelines for the syllabus, including the topics listed on p. 12 of the External Reviewers’ report.

Timeline: The change to the course title and description will be in the 2014-15 Graduate Calendar. The Steering Committee will discuss the proposed topics in Fall, 2013 and, if necessary, send it to a sub-committee for curriculum development.

5) Change the title for CLMD 6104 to something that can encompass varied content and additional faculty.

Reply: The External Reviewers are correct in their observation that CLMD 6104, Issues of Subjectivity and Difference, has not been offered with the same regularity as other core courses in the program.

Action: We will refer to the Steering Committee the development of a new title and course description with the aim of creating a course that complements current offerings, the interdisciplinary needs of the students, and areas of faculty research.

Timeline: The Steering Committee will discuss the proposed topics in fall, 2013 and, if necessary, send it to a sub-committee for curriculum development.

6) Regarding the choice of instructors to staff various CLMD course offerings, the Review Committee recommends implementing a more formal, transparent and inclusive process, given the amount of faculty members that make up the program's core faculty. The Reviewers also recommend recruiting additional junior faculty members.

Reply: The Cultural Mediations program recognizes the need for the renewal of teaching resources, recruitment of new cross appointments, and transparency in the staffing of courses. At present, the Director, in consultation with members of the Steering Committee, makes recommendations to the Dean of FASS (with the agreement of the Chair of the other department) regarding cross appointments.

Action: We will refer the issue of recruiting additional junior faculty members to the Steering Committee for discussion. To make staffing courses a more formal, transparent and inclusive process, the Director, following the External Reviewers' recommendation (p. 5), will send out an email annually in the fall inviting course proposals from all cross-appointed faculty members. These proposals will be vetted by the Steering Committee and recommendations will be made to the Dean of FASS, who in the end is responsible for staffing decisions.

Timeline: The Steering Committee will discuss the possibility of new cross-appointments of junior faculty members in the fall, 2013. Suggestions of possible will be brought to the committee in the Spring, 2014. Cross-appointments will likely be made sometime soon after that. Beginning Fall, 2013, the Director will send out an email inviting course proposals from all cross-appointed faculty members.

7) That at least one faculty member from the Department of Philosophy be recruited as core faculty member in the program.

Reply: The recommendation for inclusion of a cross appointment with Philosophy is an excellent suggestion.

Action: We will refer the possibility of a cross-appointment with Philosophy to the Steering Committee.

Timeline: The Steering Committee will discuss the possibility of new cross-appointment from Philosophy in the fall, 2013. Suggestions of possible faculty members will be brought to the committee in the Spring, 2014. Cross-appointments will likely be made sometime soon after that.

8) That first year students in the program be matched with a mentor from the core faculty of the program.

Reply: We will refer to the Steering Committee the recommendation of developing ways to better integrate and support students entering the program. The mentorship recommendation is an interesting one that will be taken into consideration. Another way of addressing this issue may be through minor revisions to the first-year core course (CLMD 6101). For example, the second-year course, CLMD 6900, already includes a workshop component for writing OGS and SSHRC applications; a similar workshop component could be added to the first year seminar that would provide mentorship opportunities for incoming students.

Timeline: The Steering Committee will consider this recommendation in the fall, 2013. It will likely have a mentorship program or other ways of supporting first-year students in place in the fall, 2014.

9) Time to completion: that a committee consider the following options/program tweaks to ensure timely degree completion: Completion of the second comprehensive exam before August or September. Preferably in the Spring of the second year, say by the end of April/early May (the reading list could be compiled by November, leaving the students some 5 months to read the materials all the while completing CLMD 6900); Symposium and Submission of the thesis proposal *before* the end of the Fall term of the 3rd year; Formally require of students that they respect program milestones; have the Cultural Mediations graduate supervisor meet with every student that falls short of the various milestones leading to admission to candidacy, requiring explanations and requesting that the student produce a clear path for progress towards the degree; Develop a new liaison with individual supervisors asking them to set clear deadlines with their students and inform the Cultural Mediations graduate supervisor of thesis progress regarding these deadlines on a bi-yearly basis. (A simple email form could be produced for this effect.)

Action: We will refer to the Steering Committee the recommendation of developing ways to improve times to completion, including the External Reviewers' suggestions. The Steering Committee will also investigate ways to formalize our relationship with thesis supervisors, propose a reporting structure, or other strategies to better monitor student progress after completion of initial requirements for the degree.

Timeline: The Steering Committee will consider this issue in the fall, 2013. Plans for better times to completion will likely be put in place by fall, 2014.

10) Second language: that a more formal approach be developed for evaluating language proficiency for students who: a) are not native speakers of a language other than English that is pertinent for their plan of study; b) have not completed a degree or a half-course credit in another language than English at the graduate level at the time of graduation from Cultural Mediations.

Action: The Graduate Supervisor and the Administrative Assistant have already developed a plan to better monitor the language requirement through academic audit reviews (usually done in May, 2013) for all students in the program.

Timeline: This recommendation has been implemented.

11) That the program become more visible on the World Wide Web. That its website advertise yearly events, students symposia, graduate student conference, faculty and student profiles; that it celebrate student and core faculty achievements (publications; grants; thesis defense, etc.).

Reply: The ICSLAC website is at present being revised to better advertise yearly events and to include more information (student profiles, student success stories, theses of graduates, etc.).

Action: The ICSLAC Director, Graduate Supervisor, and Administrator will continue to update and revise the website to create a better WWW presence for the program.

Timeline: The development of the ICSLAC's WWW presence has started and will be ongoing.

Date	Action
Immediate and Ongoing	<p>FASS is committed to maintaining the fiscal resources necessary to offer the Ph.D. program in Cultural Mediations (recommendation #1)</p> <p>The ICSLAC Director will email the faculty on an annual basis inviting course proposals (recommendation #6)</p> <p>Website Development (recommendation #10)</p>
Fall, 2013	<p>The following recommendations will be referred to the ICSLAC Steering Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • additional course offerings at the MA and BA levels (recommendation #2) • new topics for CLMD 6900 (recommendation #4) • changing the title and content of CLMD 6104 (recommendation #5) • cross-appointments of junior faculty members (recommendation #6) • cross-appointment of a faculty member from Philosophy (recommendation #7) • better support for first-year students (recommendation #8) • plans for better times to completion (recommendation #9)
Spring, 2014	<p>The Steering Committee will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have recommendations for cross-appointments of junior faculty (recommendation #6) members and of a faculty member from Philosophy (recommendation #7)
Fall, 2014	<p>The Steering Committee will:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • have plans to better support first-year students (perhaps through a mentorship program) (recommendation #8) • have plans for to improve times to completion (recommendation #9)
2014-15	<p>ICSLAC Director will consult with upper administration about a new CRC (recommendation #3)</p>

MEMORANDUM

To: CUCQA
From: John Osborne, Dean, Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences
Date: 16 September 2013
Re: Ph.D. in Cultural Mediations

Dear members of CUCQA,

In conjunction with the development of an action plan to respond to the external review of the Ph.D. program in Cultural Mediations (administered by ICSLAC), Mitchell Frank, Director of ICSLAC, has requested that I comment on the faculty resources assigned to this program.

The Institute of Comparative Studies in Literature, Art and Culture is staffed solely by faculty members who are cross-appointed to other academic units. Of that number, eight have cross-appointments > 0%, hence representing real teaching resources which can be either used or “traded” (i.e. the teaching duties can be assigned to another academic unit, in return for teaching from a faculty member not appointed to ICSLAC, or cross-appointed 100-0). These appointments total an FTE complement of 3.67, and a base budget of approximately \$500K. The teaching needs for the Cultural Mediations Ph.D. have fluctuated slightly from year to year, but there are two compulsory courses which must be offered each year (CLMD 6100 – 1.0 cr, and CLMD 6900 – 0.5 cr), plus a range of seminars from which students must choose, and a selection is offered each year. In the current year it was planned to offer CLMD 6102, 6105, and 6106, (all 0.5 cr), but one was cancelled due to a lack of enrollment. The teaching requirements for this program are thus 2.5-3.0 credits in most years (2.5 in 2013-14), plus an additional 0.5 credit for the release of the “Graduate Supervisor”.

Thus I would contend that the Cultural Mediations program currently enjoys sufficient base budget funding to manage its teaching needs; and in any given year, this can, and indeed has been, supplemented as needed with “fiscal” funds.

If and when faculty members cross-appointed to ICSLAC retire or otherwise leave the university, those percentages >0 remain in the ICSLAC budget, and thus any replacement positions would necessarily include a cross-appointment.

In the short term, there is no possibility of increasing the base budget to support the program, as there is no source of such funding. (There is no ELBA funding for graduate programs, a situation which I consider unfortunate but don't control, and the Financial Planning Group has signalled that it will not provide new base funding in the absence of a business plan which demonstrates how this can be recovered ... and more.) Fiscal funding, by definition, can only be allocated on a “year by year” basis.

I can assure CUCQA of my personal commitment to Cultural Mediations, and I see no financial threat to the program on the immediate horizon. Should the Committee wish to pursue this discussion, I would be very happy to meet with you.



Carleton
UNIVERSITY

Canada's Capital University

Office of the Provost and
Vice-President (Academic)

memorandum

DATE: November 15th, 2013

TO: Dr. John Shepherd, Chair, Carleton University Committee on Quality Assurance

FROM: Dr. Peter Ricketts, Provost and Vice-President (Academic)

RE: Final Assessment Report and Executive Summary, PhD Program in Cultural Mediations

Thank you for sending the report of the Cultural Mediations cyclical review and action plan. I have read the report and I support all the recommendations except for the proposed action for item #2 regarding improving the financial viability of the program, which is vague and non-committal. I have discussed the matter with Dean Osborne, and he is in agreement with me that this action item needs to be tightened up and a clear timeline provided for the Steering Committee to report back with actions.

Therefore, I am approving the report and the action plan to proceed to SAPC with the following revision to section 2 of the action plan:

Action: The Cultural Mediations Steering Committee will review, either through the establishment of a task force or a sub-committee, ways to improve the financial viability of the Institute, including the potential of offering additional courses at the Masters and undergraduate levels. The Steering Committee will also investigate the possibility of expanding the program's intellectual mandate to include a greater contribution from the social sciences: programs such as Anthropology and, outside FASS, Communications would appear to be most advantageous in this regard.

Timeline: The Steering Committee will consider this issue in the fall of 2013 and will report back with initial recommendations for action by the end of April 2014.

Please attach this note along with the report and action plan to be sent to SAPC.