

**CARLETON UNIVERSITY COMMITTEE ON
QUALITY ASSURANCE**

**Cyclical Review of the Master's Program in European, Russian and Eurasian Studies
And Update on BA Programs
Executive Summary and Final Assessment**

This Executive Summary and Final Assessment Report of the cyclical review of Carleton's Master's Program in European, Russian and Eurasian Studies are 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). While the cyclical review focused on the graduate program, the brief also included an update on the BA programs, which were reviewed in 2010-11.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Master's Program in European, Russian and Eurasian Studies is administered by Carleton University's Institute of European, Russian and Eurasian Studies, an academic unit of the Faculty of Public Affairs. As a consequence of the review, the program was categorised by the Carleton University Committee on Quality Assurance (CUCQA) as being of **GOOD QUALITY WITH INTERNATIONAL PRESENCE** (Carleton's IQAP 5.1.9.12).

The external reviewers' report, submitted in December 2014, offered a very positive assessment of the programs, describing EURUS as "a national and international leader in the interdisciplinary study of these regions." It "has maintained the high standards and reputation for leadership in its field that it has enjoyed since the 1970s." Unlike similar programs elsewhere in Canada and North America, the review committee added, "EURUS stands out for its emphasis on intensive research and the opportunities for professional development through its co-op program."

In the Reviewers' opinion, "the program offered by EURUS is highly relevant to society today. The unit specializes in an area of high geostrategic importance in world politics." Furthermore, "the strong public engagement of the program promotes the development of engaged citizens – not only for those students registered in the program, but also for the broader public."

The Reviewers also stated "that there is a high level of education and research in this graduate program. The theses and research papers that were examined provided abundant and concrete evidence for this conclusion." Speaking to graduate students, the Reviewers "were also impressed by their strong commitment to research, especially producing research that involved working with original-language sources."

The Reviewers concluded that "the EURUS program at Carleton stands out in its ability to prepare students for their chosen career path following graduation."

Within the context of this most positive assessment, the report nonetheless made a few recommendations for the continuing enhancement of the program. These recommendations were accepted by the Institute and the Deans of the Faculty of Public Affairs and the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs in a thorough response to the report of the external reviewers that was received by CUCQA in March 2015. On 19 June 2015, CUCQA received and approved an Action Plan detailing how these issues will be addressed.

The update on the BA programs described the progress that EURUS has made in implementing the action plan devised in response to the last Undergraduate Periodic Review, which took place in 2010. Recommendations from the UPR focused on three areas: curricular changes, consultation with sister units, and non-academic measures to foster student engagement. Other initiatives are also underway.

MEMORANDUM

To: John Shepherd, Vice-Provost and Associate Vice-President (Academic)
From: Achim Hurrelmann, Director, EURUS
André Plourde, Dean, Faculty of Public Affairs
Matthias Neufang, Dean, Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs
Date: May 15, 2015
Re: IQAP Action Plan, MA Program in European, Russian and Eurasian Studies

This action plan responds to eight issues identified by the Carleton University Committee on Quality Assurance (CUCQA) in response to the external review of the EURUS MA program. It is based on our joint response to the external reviewers' report, submitted to CUCQA on February 11, 2015. The action plan will outline our response to the eight issues, which will be summarized in tabular form at the end.

1. Possible increase in enrolment: We agree with the reviewers' suggestion that the admission targets for the EURUS MA should not be raised above the current level of 20 domestic MA students. Given the thesis/research essay requirement in the EURUS MA, students enrolled in this program need extensive supervision, which requires the current student-faculty ratio to be maintained. EURUS has in good recruitment years taken in slightly more than 20 students, and is willing to do so in the future. However, the relatively small applicant pool for a specialized program like EURUS means that meeting even to the current admission target requires an exceptional investment of time and resources for purposes of student recruitment. To maintain current levels of enrolment in an increasingly competitive environment, EURUS will continue to use donor funds from our Pushkin Fund to employ a part-time Outreach and Development Coordinator (ODC) for 10-15 hours per week. Under the supervision of the EURUS Director, the ODC's work will focus on advertising the program to potential students (through classroom visits, participation in recruitment fairs, social media, one-on-one discussions, etc.) and on convincing accepted MA applicants to take up the EURUS offer (through personal outreach).
2. Language training as a factor in delaying times to completion: We share the reviewers' concern about the admission of first-year MA students with no adequate foreign language training. While the great majority of students in this situation have been able to acquire the necessary language proficiency while at Carleton, there are a number of cases in which this problem has delayed or even prevented program completion. We do not think, however, that the solution proposed in the report – admitting the affected students to a Qualifying Year in which they could focus on language training – is feasible. Given that there is no funding for students in a Q-Year, our experience is that most students admitted to a Q-Year will be lost to other universities. Besides, students should not be penalized for the fact that foreign language education has been dramatically cut back at many universities. Instead of changing admission practices, we will develop, and monitor more systematically, individual language training plans for all incoming students who do not have an adequate language background. These

language training plans will first be developed for the incoming MA cohort joining the program in September 2015; this practice will be continued for all subsequent cohorts. The students' progress in language training will be reviewed yearly as part of the newly instituted progress reports (see item #3). The language training plans will be drawn up by the Director of the Institute, in consultation with the appropriate language instructors in the School of Linguistics and Language Studies.

3. More sophisticated tracking of times to completion: We agree with the reviewers' suggestion to develop a better system for tracking times to completion. While we do not consider times to completion a major problem of the program, and have in fact observed an improvement recently due to our efforts to more clearly delimit the research essay option, a significant number of EURUS MA students do take longer than the standard two calendar years to complete their degree. We agree with the reviewers that it is necessary to distinguish if such program extensions are due to (a) a student's conscious investment of time in potentially beneficial activities such as co-op or language training or (b) poor program planning on part of the student or difficulties in accessing necessary courses. In order to draw this distinction, and monitor times to completion more systematically, we will implement yearly progress reports for all MA students, to be issued each summer, which track the completion of program and language requirements and include individual recommendations. These progress reports will first be issued for current first-year MA students in August 2015; for this cohort and all future cohorts, they will be issued yearly from then on. The progress reports will be drawn up by the Director of the Institute, with administrative support by the Administrator and by the FGPA, and in consultation with each student's research essay/thesis supervisor. We will explore options of formally incorporating the progress report in the students' audit, similarly to FGPA's milestone reports at the PhD level.

4. Composition of the Committee of Management: The reviewers' report recommends that Carleton units supporting EURUS should routinely be represented by their Chairs or Directors in the Committee of Management. We do not think it would be advisable to make this a general rule. At present, many units are represented by their respective European/Russian experts, and we have found their contributions very valuable. We propose to leave it to Chairs and Directors to decide whether they want to self-nominate themselves for the EURUS Committee of Management, or whether they want to nominate another faculty member. The EURUS Director will discuss these options more explicitly with the Chairs and Directors of contributing units whenever new representatives for the Committee of Management must be nominated (usually in September; members have a two-year term).

5. Clarification and simplification of interdepartmental cooperation: The report suggests that processes such as the cross-listing of courses or the provision of team-taught courses across units should be simplified. EURUS has not experienced major problems in these respects. Initiatives are ongoing in the Faculty of Public Affairs to enhance various forms of cross-unit cooperation. In addition, a review of the governance of interdisciplinary (multi-unit) programs in FPA was recently concluded; it reached the conclusion that there are "no significant issues relating to [multi-unit programs] that needed to be addressed at the level of the Faculty".

6. Number of faculty specializing in Russia: In our assessment, the current number of faculty appointed to EURUS, or associated with the unit, is sufficient to provide the MA program. The lack of a Russianist in the History Department (under the responsibility of the Dean of Arts and Social Sciences) is a long-standing area of concern, even though this problem has been partially addressed by the 50% appointment of a Russian/Eurasian historian to EURUS. In addition, we want to emphasize that it will be crucially important for the viability of EURUS that the senior faculty members teaching Russian politics within EURUS are adequately replaced when they decide to retire. In this event, decisions on hiring will be made within the regular hiring procedures implemented in the Faculty of Public Affairs.
7. Russian language training: We agree with the report that Russian language instruction at Carleton is currently not sufficient to meet the needs of the EURUS MA, even though we recognize the efforts of the School of Linguistics and Language Studies to provide the best possible services within their limited resources. We are particularly concerned about the lack of regular fourth-year Russian classes; these could only be offered in recent years because EURUS decided to pay for them using donor funds. The Faculty of Public Affairs is committed to finding a more sustainable solution for the provision of these essential courses. The Dean of FPA will enter into discussions with SLALS about an appropriate cost-sharing model to secure the provision of fourth-year Russian instruction, to be implemented beginning in the 2016/17 academic year.
8. Expanding the role of the RA position supporting EURUS: EURUS currently uses donor funds to employ a part-time Outreach and Development Coordinator (ODC) who works primarily on student recruitment initiatives. In addition, one RA funded from the TA budget of the Faculty of Graduate and Postdoctoral Affairs works within EURUS, mostly on event planning and event management. The report suggests expanding the role of the RA, in particular to work on the establishment of alumni networks. We agree that alumni engagement should be expanded. In the spring of 2015, EURUS has already implemented some initiatives, in cooperation with Carleton's Alumni Office, including a career night with alumni and the activation of the Institute's LinkedIn account "EURUS alumni and friends" (doubling its membership within two months). The RA will continue to work on such alumni engagement initiatives.

Issue	Proposed measures	Responsibility	Timeline
Possible increase in enrolment	Continued employment of Outreach and Development Coordinator (ODC), enabled by donor funds, to support recruitment activities	Director EURUS	Ongoing
Language training as a factor in delaying times to completion	Development of language training plans for all incoming students	Director EURUS, in consultation with appropriate instructors in SLALS	September 2015 (for incoming MA cohort)
More sophisticated tracking of times to completion	Development of yearly progress reports for all MA students which track the completion of program and language requirements, and include individual recommendations	Director EURUS, with support by Administrator and FGPA, in consultation with student's research essay/thesis supervisor	August 2015 for current first-year MA students, yearly from then on for all students who entered in Fall 2014 or later
Composition of the Committee of Management	Extended consultation with Chairs and Directors of contributing units, which discuss the option of Chair's/Director's self-nomination	Director EURUS	September 2015 for units whose representatives must be re-appointed, yearly from then on
Clarification and simplification of interdepartmental cooperation	Initiatives to enhance cross-unit cooperation and review of delivery of interdisciplinary programs in the Faculty of Public Affairs	Dean FPA	Ongoing; review of interdisciplinary programs concluded in March 2015
Number of faculty specializing in Russia	Replace senior faculty members teaching Russian politics when they retire, within the context of FPA's regular hiring procedures	Dean FPA	Will become relevant if and when retirements occur
Russian language training	Develop cost-sharing model with SLALS to ensure that fourth-year Russian language courses are offered without having to draw on donor funds	Dean FPA, in negotiation with Director SLALS	To be in place for the 2016/17 academic year
Expanding the role of the RA position supporting EURUS	Develop alumni engagement strategies (including career nights, social media) which can be maintained by the RA appointed to EURUS	Director EURUS	Ongoing since Spring 2015