
Final Assessment Report: Undergraduate Program Review – History
Academic Planning and Priorities Committee of Senate – Algoma University

March 2012

Algoma University's Institutional Quality Assurance Process requires an objective, comprehensive, and constructive evaluation of all academic programs. The purpose of the review process is to assure the quality and relevance of the university's programs through an analytical and comprehensive analysis of the program that will result in recommendations for actions to enhance the quality of the program.

The Department of History delivers several programs, which include: (a) the Bachelor of Arts (General), (b) the Bachelor of Arts (Honours), and (c) the Honours Diploma. Following the departmental self-study and the external review of these programs, the AU IQAP (s. 3.14) calls for the preparation of a *Final Assessment Report* (FAR) that summarizes and evaluates the Review Committee's report and the internal responses. The following serves as the Committee's assessment report to the Department, the Divisional Chair, the Senate, and the Quality Council.

The core strengths of the program include (a) a student-centred approach to learning that combines experiential and discursive methods, (b) intellectual rigour, (c) frequent opportunities for faculty-student interaction, and (d) opportunities for the development of writing and oral competencies.

The opportunities for program improvement and enhancement include curricular revisions aimed at program growth, the integration of experiential learning within the program, and the introduction of interdisciplinary courses that provide strong foundations across the humanities disciplines.

Specific recommendations for action/implementation to enhance the quality of the programs are focused upon the advancement of creative and innovative solutions to significantly reverse the five-year trend of falling enrolments (while maintaining program quality). In order of priority, these are

1. the introduction of a core Canadian survey course (2000-level) consistent with normative practices in undergraduate HIST programs.
2. the introduction of elective courses of broad student interest – appealing to majors and non-majors – including those in film history, women’s history, military history and public history.
3. the introduction of thesis and non-thesis options for students with varied academic or career plans, with both options maintaining the strong intellectual rigour of the program.
4. the revision of course numbering practices to align with standard University practices, wherein the number assigned to a course assists in identifying the student population for which the course is intended and reflects the sequential development of knowledge in a given area (e.g., survey vs specialized).
5. the deletion of dormant HIST courses to improve student expectations of regular offerings and faculty plans for rolling course rosters.
6. the provision of the three-year rolling-rosters to students and advisors in order to assist with program planning.

Curricular and program revisions recommended here do not implicate additional financial resources. Non-personnel resources (library print/monographs) that support the program strengths are recommended to remain. The reversal of falling enrolment trends by a sustained increase in number of majors and FTE would enable increased resource allocations (e.g., faculty) to further that growth.

Pursuant to the AU IQAP, the department is responsible for acting on these recommendations, in concert with the Dean, Curriculum Committee and the University of Senate. For the academic department, the recommended timeline for the implementation plan is recommended to be: (a) for all curricular and program revisions – including new courses – an 18-month timeline, and (b) within 6 months of the public posting of the FAR (Final Assessment Report), the Department Chair would submit to the Dean a *Status Report* on the progress of the Implementation Plan.

The implementation plan detailed above, within this Final Assessment Report, shall be distributed to the Department, Divisional Chair, the Senate and the Quality Council.