

Ongoing Improvement Progress Report

Instructions and Report Template

As part of the protocols outlined in Western's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), to facilitate the continuous improvement of academic programs between review cycles, in connection with the Final Assessment Report (FAR) and Implementation Plan, a monitoring process will include an Ongoing Improvement Progress Report. The outcomes of this report will be considered as part of the program's next cyclical review.

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the operationalization of the implementation plan following a Cyclical Program Review (or the review of a New Program). This should include a brief summary of actions taken by the Program and the Dean's Office since the completion of the review (usually about three years), as well as an update on the stage of implementation for all applicable items. These include:

- whether the action item(s) are in progress, complete or no longer applicable (with a brief explanation);
- the timelines of each item and how they are progressing or expected to progress, particularly if they are diverting from original timelines in the FAR and Implementation Plan, and;
- a short description of any other program developments and improvements that have taken place following the review.
- For new programs only, an evaluation of the initial administration and resourcing of the program.


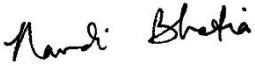
The following report template has been created for the program to report on progress made regarding recommendations presented in the Implementation Plan, and any other relevant program developments and enhancements.

- The program will complete the template and submit it to the faculty Dean's Office for sign-off.
- The program will then submit the completed Ongoing Improvement and Progress Report to the Office of Academic Quality and Enhancement (OAQE). Reports are due by June 30.
 - The OAQE will present all Ongoing Improvement and Progress Reports to SUPR-U/G for approval. Approvals, or any follow-up questions/concerns, will be communicated to the program and Dean's Office by the OAQE.
 - It should be noted that as per the requirements of the province's Quality Council, progress reports will be posted on the [reports page](#) of the OAQE website.

Ongoing Improvement Progress Report

Hispanic Studies, MA, PhD / Faculty of Arts and Humanities

Program	Hispanic Studies, MA, PhD	Faculty / Affiliated University College	<i>Faculty of Arts and Humanities</i>
Approval Dates of the Review	SUPR-G: April 14, 2020 SCAPA: April 29, 2020 Senate: May 8, 2020	Year of the Next Review	2027-2028
Link to the Programs Final Assessment Report (FAR)	https://www.uwo.ca/pvp/vpacademic/iqap/academic_programs/iqap_reports/artsglad/2020%20Hispanic%20Studies%20Program%20Review.pdf		
If applicable, submission of follow-up report(s)	Submitted to SUPR-G, September 2022 (emailed along with this form)		

	Name	Signature	Date
Program Chair/Director	Constanza Burucúa		February 14, 2023
Dean (or delegate)	Nandi Bhatia		May 23, 2023

Progress Update on the Implementation Plan

Recommendation #1	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
<p>That the University make a senior tenured appointment in Linguistics within Hispanic Studies (focus on syntax and morphology).</p>	<p>Develop a plan to address the anticipated challenges related to supervision capacity in the Linguistics field of the program.</p> <p>The Department of Languages and Cultures should develop a proposal articulating the resources necessary to maintain the field, or a plan to phase out the field. This proposal should then be considered in FAH's next submission to the university's annual planning and budgeting process.</p>	<p>Chair, Department of Languages & Cultures Graduate Chair, Hispanic Studies Dean, FAH</p>	<p>The proposal should be included in the Fall 2020 FAH planning and budgeting document, with a timeline to implement the plan in September 2021.</p>
<p>Recommendation Implemented</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially</p> <p>If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>			
<p>Progress</p> <p><i>What specific actions have been taken?</i></p> <p>1.To address the challenges related to supervision capacity, we worked with faculty from other graduate programs who have membership in our program to provide supervision. We ensured that we only admit/admitted students that we have/had the capacity to supervise. Currently, we have two linguists in the program, one of whom can supervise both MA and PhD students, while the other one can supervise only MA students (because of the nature of her contract). The field is maintained thanks to the efforts of these two</p>			

colleagues, as well as to the support that we receive from others who are affiliated with the program – be it colleagues in the Linguistics program, in the French department, or from other institutions.

2. The Graduate Chair wrote to the Dean’s office explaining the need for resources. Conversations with the Dean’s office about the possibility of a new hire in Linguistics (tenure track) are still ongoing.

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

Additional Comments

If applicable

Recommendation #2	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Whenever possible within the budget constraints of A&H, maintain at least current levels of funding for international graduate students in Hispanic Studies.	The Graduate Chair, with the Dept Chair and Dean should develop a strategy for setting master’s enrolments that are sustainable in the context of appropriate funding packages. This strategy must acknowledge the higher enrolment of international master’s students in this program than others in FAH, as well as the impact of shifting the master’s program to 3 terms.	Chair, Department of Languages & Cultures Graduate Chair, Hispanic Studies Dean, FAH	Enrolment targets and funding packages should be determined for the Fall 2020 recruitment cycle and implemented for September 2021 admissions.

Recommendation Implemented

Yes No Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? Yes No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

Additional Comments

If applicable

Our funding packages for international MA students have remained stable. We are thankful to the Dean's office for that.

Upon consideration of the impact of shifting the master's program to 3 terms, we decided to provide students with both options (1-year and 2-year options).

As of September 2023, we will be enrolling students in both the recently approved 2-year master's and our current 1-year stream.

As we move toward the implementation of both the 3-term and 6-term MA streams, the Dean's office has agreed (at least verbally) to financially support both streams, with the same kind of funding packages.

Recommendation #3	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
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<p>Conduct a thorough review of the learning outcomes, viability, and sustainability of the Transatlantic Seminar, taking into consideration the changes to the M.A. program and the status of the Linguistics track.</p>	<p>The Transatlantic Seminar is deemed an exemplary component of the Hispanic Studies graduate programs, but it requires revision to address several challenges, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The need for extensive preparation on the part of the instructor ☐ Difficulty in achieving balance between Literature & Culture and Linguistics content. • The need for significant financial resources. • Difficulty in engaging students over the whole term because invited speakers' talks in the 2 tracks are organized in blocks. • Students in one track often do not have the necessary background in the other track to take full advantage of the content. • Instructors other than the instructor of record are required to do grading but receive no workload credit. <p>The seminar should be revised to address these concerns in the context of the plans regarding the sustainability of the Linguistics field and the introduction of the 3-term MA.</p>	<p>Graduate Chair, Hispanic Studies</p> <p>Graduate faculty members, Hispanic Studies</p>	<p>Revisions to the Transatlantic Seminar should be ready for implementation in September 2021</p>
<p>Recommendation Implemented</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially</p> <p>If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>			
<p>Progress</p>			

What specific actions have been taken?

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

Additional Comments

If applicable

Since the program review, the Transatlantic Seminar has undergone many changes. In May 2021, its name changed to *Interdisciplinary Approaches to Hispanic Studies*, to reflect, in a more comprehensive manner, its aim: to expose our graduate students to a wide range of research and to current debates within Hispanic Studies.

After one more iteration of the course (Fall 2021), it was modified again, becoming a yearly *Colloquium*: a program milestone, compulsory for all students while enrolled in the program (see details in appendix).

Its aim remains the same as that of the former course.

1. While the only obligation to fulfill this requirement is attendance, the instructor in charge of its organization remains committed to provide students with a rich and comprehensive array of presentations. This implies a lot of work in terms of organization (before the beginning of the school year) and, when guest speakers come in person, a lot of time goes into hosting. And while the colleague in charge of the course will have to keep track of attendance, there will be no marking (as there will be no written assignments).
2. In terms of the balance between the content of the course (Literature and Culture on one hand, and Linguistics on the other), we try to observe an equitable share of presentations. To achieve that, the person in charge of the course works in collaboration with the Linguists when programming the course and who to invite.
3. As per the financial resources, it should be noted that an outcome of the global pandemic was that we all learned to work remotely (via Zoom). In the context of a course / colloquium of this nature, this implies that while we can still have guest speakers in person, depending on budget, geographical proximity, or other sources of funding (i.e. collaborations with other units, research groups, grants, etc.), we can now plan the Colloquium both with visiting colleagues and with others presenting remotely.
4. We have changed (suspended) the block format since receiving this comment / recommendation.

5. In preparation for each presentation, students are provided with suggested readings.

6. There is no more grading involved in the Colloquium.

7. At least 1/3 of the presentations in the Colloquium are in Linguistics – this proportion reflects the composition of our student body.

Recommendation #4	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Starting in September 2020, monitor times to completion for students entering the 1-year M.A. program. If necessary, adjust program to ensure that the promise of completion in 1 year can be satisfied.	Monitor the progress of all master's students in the new 3-term program on a term-by-term basis, identifying any challenges to completion within the expected timeframe.	Graduate Chair, Hispanic Studies Graduate Program Assistant	Monitor the first 2 cohorts (admitted in September 2020 and September 2021) and make any necessary revisions prior to the start of the third cohort (September 2022)

Recommendation Implemented

Yes No Partially

If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? Yes No

Progress

What specific actions have been taken?

Next Steps (if applicable)

What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?

Additional Comments

If applicable

For the first iteration of the 1-year MA (2020-2021) we were simultaneously adapting to the new format and to the challenges posed by the pandemic.

We systematically monitored the progress of our incoming MA students, and while there were some withdraws due to the consequences of the pandemic (2 in the 2020-2021 academic year, 1 the year after), students who finish the program do not seem to struggle to complete the research component / MRP. This is thanks to: a) the work that is done during the Fall term in the context of Research Methods & Professionalization (SP9505), where students begin to work on their own projects; b) a clearly established timeline during the Winter and Summer terms.

However, there are two areas of concern, both of which we have addressed in the latest Major Modifications:

- 1) In both iterations of the MA, some domestic and international students commented on the short duration of the program, expressing their interest in it being longer; while some students make the most out of the 1-year MA, others would benefit from a lengthier program (to improve their research skills, to learn more before continuing into a PhD, etc.) Informed both by our own observations and by our students' input, following the implementation of the Major Mods approved in June 2022, we will be able to offer the two options (1-year and 2-year MA) as of September 2023.
- 2) Ours is a bi-lingual program: on one hand, domestic students are not as fluent in Spanish as one would wish; on the other, many of our international students struggle considerably before passing the English Language Proficiency test (an exit requirement in our program). While this problem is more accentuated in the context of the one-year MA, given the short period of time in which many different requirements need to be met to graduate, many of our international PhD students have difficulties with this program component. To tackle this issue, we have developed a new program milestone, the Second Language Proficiency & Professionalization (for details, please refer to appendix).

Recommendation #5	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
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<p>Offer a more clearly defined sequence of courses, and whenever possible try to offer sequenced introductory and advanced courses in the same subject.</p>	<p>The program has indicated that it is developing a visual overview of the cycle of courses offered. This new overview should be made available to all graduate students during the Summer 2020 term in order that students may choose appropriate courses for the following Fall, Winter and Summer terms. An annual practice of providing this overview in the Summer term for the following 3 terms should be introduced.</p>		
<p>Recommendation Implemented</p> <p><input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Partially</p> <p>If no, or partially, is implementation on schedule with the timeline? <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No</p>			
<p>Progress</p> <p><i>What specific actions have been taken?</i></p>			
<p>Next Steps (if applicable)</p> <p><i>What actions remain? Is there further follow-up?</i></p>			

Additional Comments

If applicable

Changes concerning the offer of graduate courses have been introduced in the past couple of years to avoid overlapping in terms of content and scheduling, and to make sure that the offer is balanced between the two streams, and throughout the terms.

All information about courses offered in the following Fall and Winter terms is communicated to students in the program's website by May / early June (a visual overview - a graph or equivalent - has not been developed yet). During the Summer months, the graduate chair works (via e-mail) with each incoming student in their course selection.

Note: The total number of expandable text boxes will be dependent on the number of prioritized recommendations appearing in the program's most recent Final Assessment Report (FAR).

Continuous Program Enhancement

What additional initiatives or changes has the program been working on in relation to continuous program improvement?

As a follow up to the IQAP Review, Hispanic Studies introduced a series of minor and major modifications to the program. Senate approved the major modification at the June 10th, 2022 meeting. Subsequently, SGPS reported these modifications to the Quality Council as required.

Please see details below. The document containing all the information about the major modifications that have been introduced is available upon request.

A brief description of the proposed modification. Indicate the changes to be made (e.g. course description, deletion of a course, etc.):

1. Change requirements of existing MA in Hispanic Studies (Project-based) – 1-Year / 3 Terms

- Add an additional required course:
 - o Spanish 9613A – Principles of Language Teaching and Acquisition (0.5 Credits)
- Add two new milestones:
 - o Interdisciplinary Approaches to Hispanic Studies – Program Colloquium
 - o Second Language Proficiency & Professionalization
- Reduce elective course requirements from 2.5 credits to 1.0 credits

2. Introduce a new thesis-based curriculum option for the MA in Hispanic Studies – 2-Year / 6 Terms

3. Change requirements of the existing PhD in Hispanic Studies

- Add an additional required course:
 - o Spanish 9613A – Principles of Language Teaching and Acquisition (0.5 Credits)
 - This course requirement will be waived for students who completed it as MA students in our program;
- Remove a current required course:
 - o Spanish 9785A - Interdisciplinary Approaches to Hispanic Studies (0.5 Credits)
- Add two new milestones:
 - o Interdisciplinary Approaches to Hispanic Studies – Program Colloquium
 - o Second Language Proficiency & Professionalization (Spanish or English, depending on whether the students are domestic or international)

MA project-based and MA thesis-based:

Two years ago, the six-term / two-year MA (with the option of course or thesis-based) was revised and replaced by a three-term / one-year MA (project-based with Major Research Paper, MRP). Having essayed this model for two years, the program aims to provide more than one option for incoming graduate students by offering two curriculum options: a three-term / one year MA (project-based with MRP), and a six-term / two-year MA (with thesis).

Required courses (common to MA and PhD students):

All incoming students will begin their studies in the program as a cohort, while completing the two required courses. In Spanish 9505A/9605A- Research Methods (already required), students will work on their respective research projects' pre-proposal, which

includes a working title, brief description of topic, research questions, structure (of MRP, MA thesis, or PhD thesis). In Spanish 9613A (Principles of Language Teaching and Acquisition), students will broaden their knowledge about the processes involved in the teaching and learning of a language; it is expected that this will strengthen their performance as TAs in our undergraduate courses, while contributing to their professionalization.

New milestones (common to MA and PhD students):

Interdisciplinary Approaches to Hispanic Studies is going to be removed as a course and replaced with a two-term **Colloquium** (Fall and Winter, bi-weekly). To complete this milestone, students in their first year in the program must attend all sessions (around 13 x year) and, after that, they need to attend 75% of sessions (or no less than 9 x year).

The aim of the **Second Language Proficiency & Professionalization** milestone is to provide students with a set of skills to properly conduct research in two languages: domestic students will improve their Spanish, and international students their English. In consultation with supervisors and with the Graduate Chair and/or Committee, the instructor of each course in the program will assign students a set of readings in either Spanish or English (depending on which is the language that they need to improve) related to their research topic or interests. Student will have to write a review of an article in the language in which the article is written (around 300 words). Throughout their studies, students will be asked to do brief presentations (15 mins approx.) on their own research and its progress in that second language. To complete this milestone, students will have to read and review in writing a minimum of 4 articles and a maximum of 6, and will have to do a minimum of 2 and a maximum of 4 oral presentations. This milestone may be waived for fully bilingual students, who can demonstrate that they have previous formal education in both languages.

A brief description of the rationale for the modification (e.g., explain how the program will be improved and/or how students will benefit from the proposed modification)

We have received mixed feedback about the 1-year format from students: while for some of them it seems to work out fine, for others it feels ‘rushed’, and insufficient to properly settle into a study routine at the graduate level. These perceptions transcend the domestic / international student divide.

The sentiment (‘mixed feelings’) seems to be echoed among colleagues: we can see why or how many of our MA students are (or perceive to be) under pressure, and this is manifested in specific ways:

- Anxiety over ability to complete program, especially MRP;

- Difficulty to combine own studies and teaching experience – this aspect also translates into negative consequences at the undergraduate level, because our Spanish program relies on graduate students' TAships;
- Difficulties for international students to fulfill the English Proficiency requirement by the end of the program;
- Fewer MA students are joining collaborative programs.

The proposed new model would bring dynamism to the program and a competitive edge, while also providing students with the option to choose between a 1-year or a 2-year MA, depending on their professional interests and needs.

1-Year MA:

By reducing the number of courses and changing the requirements, we believe that students will be able to better concentrate on their research interests and skills, while also improving their teaching abilities. Equally, this would facilitate the option of pursuing a collaborative program.

New required course - Spanish 9613A – Principles of Language Teaching and Acquisition (0.5 Credits) – common to 1-Year MA, 2-Year MA, PhD:

It would support the teaching component that our program offers to graduate students, who play a key role in our undergraduate program in Spanish as TAs. Providing them with strong tools to improve their teaching skills and to comprehend the processes involved in the acquisition of a second language, would benefit not just them, many of whom might continue their careers as Spanish teachers, but also our undergraduate students. Additionally, we could further capitalize on this in terms of promotion of the program (i.e. we provide formal training in the teaching of Spanish).

Cohorts:

By asking all incoming students (MA and PhD, as well as students in the two streams – Culture and Literature and Linguistics) to complete the **2 required courses** during their first term in the program, it is our aim to provide them with a strong sense of community and collegiality, as well as a robust head start in the program vis-à-vis research project and teaching. This is also fostered throughout their time in the program by the **Colloquium (new milestone)**, where students are expected to meet and interact periodically throughout the academic year.

Second Language Proficiency & Professionalization (new milestone):

During the past few years, we have observed that our international students struggle to complete the English proficiency requirement. Equally, our domestic students' fluency and writing skills in Spanish could be improved. The introduction of this new milestone will contribute to balance the field in terms of the bi-lingual fluency of all our students (domestic and international). This component is intended to provide them with the opportunity to strengthen their language skills and perfect them at an academic level while completing their courses in the program:

- Domestic students (assuming that their first language (L1) is English) or international students whose L1 is not Spanish would refine their Spanish by working on specific skills (i.e. reading and understanding scholarly publications in Spanish, presenting on their research in Spanish, etc.);
 - International students (assuming that their L1 is not English) would work toward the successful fulfillment of their English proficiency requirement (currently an exit requirement in our program);
 - In the case of international students whose L1 is neither English nor Spanish, the program (Graduate Committee or Supervisory Committee) would propose whether the student would perfect their English or Spanish skills; it could even invite the student to make the most out of the opportunity by working on both.
- This component would formalize and strengthen the skill to conduct research at a professional level in a second language, which would also be a great contribution to our program's overall learning outcomes.