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- whether the action item(s) are in progress, complete or no longer applicable (with a brief explanation);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.
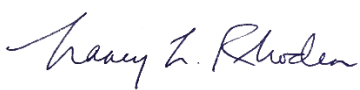- For new programs only, an evaluation of the initial administration and resourcing of the program.

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

History, BA / Faculty of Social Science

Program	History, BA	**Faculty / Affiliated University College**	Faculty of Social Science
Approval Dates of the Review	SUPR-U: January 20, 2021 SCAPA: February 3, 2021 Senate: February 12, 2021	**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/faculty_of_social_science_undergrad/2020%20History%20Program%20Review.pdf*	
If applicable, submission of follow-up report(s)		*Not applicable*	

	Name	Signature	Date
Program Chair/Director	Nancy Rhoden, Chair of History	*[signature]*	June 12, 2023
Dean (or delegate)	Nicholas Harney, Dean	*[signature]*	June 16, 2023

Progress Update on the Implementation Plan

Recommendation #1	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Review program requirements with an eye to flexibility and ensuring that students can complete requirements in a timely fashion.	Program review, whether through regular meetings and consultation or a (series of) department retreat(s)	Chair/Undergraduate Chair in consultation with Department.	The review could be complete by the end of the summer of 2021, with potential changes to go through the approval process in 2021-22.

Recommendation Implemented

X Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

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

Progress

The History Undergraduate Committee discussed the module requirements, including the findings from the Undergraduate Program Review, Department Retreat, Key Recommendations, and input from undergraduate students. After several meetings, in March 2021 the Undergraduate Committee voted to change the module requirements to:

- *Add a 0.5 course requirement at the 4000 level for the History Major, and add a 1.0 course requirement at the 4000 level for the History Specialization.*
- *Reduce the geographic requirement from 3.0 to be drawn from 3 different geographical areas to 1.0 (2 courses) that can be drawn from any of the 3 different geographic areas (U.S., Europe, or World) and 1 thematic/international area.*

- *Reduce the pre-1800 requirement from 1.0 course(s) to a 0.5 course*

In April 2021 the Department voted to approve these changes. The revisions were communicated to the students, and implemented September 2021.

Since releasing the new module requirements, we have received positive feedback, including:

- *Students reported having a much easier time selecting courses at course registration*
- *Students have the flexibility to enroll in courses, or subject areas they want to specialize in*
- *The new requirements ensure students study a broad range of History courses, topics, and themes*
- *The Department has greater flexibility when creating the undergraduate timetable*

Following the module revisions in 2021, the Department of History continued to collect feedback regarding module requirements. In 2022, the Department voted to change the requirement that stated students may only count 2100-level courses with a minimum grade of 75% towards the module, now allowing any passing grade to count. The Department also voted to expand module entrance requirements, similar to those in other Departments in the Faculty of Social Science; now students who have not completed 1.0 at the 1000 level can enter the module with 1.0 from 2000-level courses or above. These changes will be implemented as of September 2023.

Next Steps (if applicable)

The Department Chair and Undergraduate Chair will continue to welcome feedback from faculty members and students regarding module requirements.

Additional Comments

Recommendation #2	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline

Clearly articulate learning outcomes for modules.	Part of the program review (above).	Chair/Undergraduate Chair, in consultation with Department.	As above—part of the program review process.

Recommendation Implemented

☐ Yes   ☐ No   **X** Partially

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

Progress

The Undergraduate Chair has drafted a set of learning outcomes for our modules and shared them with the Chair and Undergraduate Committee for discussion and revision.

Next Steps (if applicable)

The Undergraduate Committee is currently reviewing the draft learning outcomes. The Undergraduate Committee will revise and finalize these outcomes before taking them to the department for approval this Fall.

Additional Comments

Though we are arguably behind the schedule proposed under Recommendation #1 (above), due to personnel changes and the COVID pandemic, we anticipate no difficulty in approving a clear set of learning outcomes for our modules by 2023-24.

Recommendation #3	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Ensure that students in International Relations have adequate access the upper-level courses they require	Meetings with Chair/Undergraduate Chair of Political Science.	Chair/Undergraduate Chair.	Immediate and ongoing.

Recommendation Implemented

X Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

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

Progress

In the 2022-23 academic year, the Department of History added over 100 additional seats for International Relations students in IR-eligible courses at the 3000 and 4000 levels. The department continues to introduce new 0.5 courses at the 3000 and 4000 levels, with many faculty members converting 1.0 courses into new 0.5 offerings. (International Relations students have reported difficulty fitting 1.0 courses into their schedule, stating a preference for 0.5 courses.) The Department of History has also worked closely with the Department of Political Science to try to ensure that International Relations eligible courses do not overlap.

Since the "IR Eligible" list was created 10+ years ago, the department has steadily increased the number of courses with significant international content, including new courses and a rethinking of older courses to add international content. In December 2022, the Undergraduate Committee voted to expand the list of IR-eligible History courses to all essay courses at the 3000 and 4000 level. In February 2023 the Department voted to pass this change, which will be implemented in September 2023. These changes give IR students a greater selection of courses on international topics. We also recognize that taking courses that are not explicitly international will still allow students to make connections to their other courses with more explicit international themes.

Next Steps (if applicable)

As new courses are introduced the Undergraduate Chair will review them to ensure they include an international lens. The Department of History will continue to work with the Department of Policial Science when timetabling. The Department of History will continue to welcome feedback from the Student Association of International Relations, and as well as students in the International Relations module regarding courses.

Additional Comments

Recommendation #4	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline
Because Jewish Studies is a collaborative program whose home is not in the Dept. of History, this report will recommend that the Department continue to monitor its participation in Jewish Studies.	Part of program review (above).	Chair/Undergraduate Chair in consultation with Department.	As above—part of the program review process.

Recommendation Implemented

X Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

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

Progress

The Department of History continued to monitor the Jewish Studies enrollment numbers and ITR requests. In 2022 Huron University College hired a new director of Jewish Studies. In November 2022 the Department of History Chair, Undergraduate Chair, and Undergraduate Coordinator met with the Huron Director of Jewish Studies to discuss the modules. Due to low enrollment numbers and difficulties in staffing core courses on Main Campus, the Chair proposed withdrawing the module on Main. This was met with support from Huron. After further consultation (with Huron, King's and Western History) and deliberation, it was decided that the best course of action would be to close the module on Main Campus, consolidating Jewish Studies at Huron and King's. In February 2023, the Department of History voted to close the Jewish Studies Major and Minor on Main Campus. In May 2023, Senate approved closing the Major and Minor in Jewish Studies on Main Campus.

Next Steps (if applicable)

Students enrolled in the Major and Minor in Jewish Studies on Main Campus will be contacted to inform them that admission to these modules will be closed as of September 1, 2023, and students currently in the module must fulfill all module requirements by August 31, 2027. The module will be withdrawn effective September 1, 2027. The Department of History remains committed to supporting Jewish Studies at Huron and King's as much as we are able, and will continue to offer courses when possible that support the module.

Additional Comments

Recommendation #5	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline

Consider discontinuing the Major in Middle East Studies.	Part of program review (above).	Chair/Undergraduate Chair in consultation with Department.	As above—part of the program review process.

Recommendation Implemented

X Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

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

Progress

In April 2021, in response to the recommendations from the Undergraduate Review and low module enrollment numbers, the Department of History voted to discontinue the Major in Middle East Studies. Admission to the module was closed on September 1, 2021. Students in the module were notified that they would continue to receive support from the Department of History and that they must complete their module requirements by August 2025. The module will be withdrawn effective September 1, 2025.

Next Steps (if applicable)

Additional Comments

Recommendation #6	Proposed Action and Follow-up	Responsibility	Timeline

Review grading practices to ensure that History students aren't disadvantaged, especially when applying to professional and other programs.	Regular review of grading practices.	Undergraduate Chair and Committee on Undergraduate Studies.	Ongoing

Recommendation Implemented

X Yes ☐ No ☐ Partially

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

Progress

We have continued to review and reflect on our grading practices, and to collect and share aggregate data on grade distributions each year. A review of the most recent available data, from academic year 2021-22, shows that grade distributions in History, once lower on average than grades from other departments in the Faculty of Social Science, are now almost identical to faculty-wide averages.

Next Steps (if applicable)

We will continue to review our grading practices and aggregate averages, doing our best to serve our students while maintaining the academic standards of our program.

Additional Comments

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

The History Department hosted a series of well-attended lunches in 2022-23 to promote faculty conversations on teaching and EDI. We plan to continue regular lunch meetings for interested faculty to discuss teaching and related issues.

We introduced 16 new courses in 2022-23, which will be offered in 2023-24. This reflects the hiring of two new faculty members who started teaching in fall 2022: Prof. Ruramisai Charumbira, who is an expert on African history, and Prof. Mitchell Hammond, who has expertise on early modern history and public health. It also reflects the department's interests in creating new thematic courses at the 1000 level and on-going curricular renewal.

International Relations (IR) will be housed in History for the next 3-5 years, and the new director, Prof. Frank Schumacher will begin on July 1, 2023.

We also introduced a new Peer Mentoring Network in 2023-23 which we plan to continue. This is an initiative that provides discipline-specific writing support for undergraduates. Senior module-student volunteers gain valuable experience for resume-enhancement. It provides the department and undergraduate chairs with insights into student needs. It offers an extra opportunity for help outside the university's Writing Centre which is very busy around mid-term and finals because of student demand.