

YORK UNIVERSITY

Final Assessment Report – Executive Summary

**Italian Studies, Undergraduate Program
BA, iBA**

Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies

Cyclical Program Review – 2012 to 2020

This Final Assessment Report (FAR) provides a synthesis of the cyclical review of the programs listed below.

Program(s) Reviewed:

Italian Studies, BA and IBA

Reviewers appointed by the Vice-Provost Academic:

Dr. Norma Bouchard, Dean, College of Arts and Sciences, Drexel University, Philadelphia, USA

Dr. Norma Sue Fisher-Stitt, Professor, Department of Dance, School of Arts, Performance and Design, York University, Toronto, Canada

Cyclical Program Review Key Milestones:

Cyclical Program Review launch: September 19, 2019

Self-study submitted to Vice-Provost Academic: April 19, 2021

Date of the Site Visit: June 9, 2021

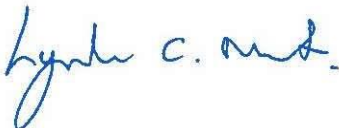
Review Report received: June 30, 2021

Program Response received: August 2021

Dean's Response received: September 2021

Implementation Plan and FAR confirmed by Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance, May 2022.

Submitted by Lyndon Martin, Vice-Provost Academic, York University



This review was conducted under the York University Quality Assurance Protocol, August 2013.

SITE VISIT: June 9, 2021

The visit began with a meeting with Lyndon Martin, Vice Provost Academic. Meetings followed with JJ McMurtry, Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies; Sean Keraj, Associate Dean, Programs; and Anita Lam, Associate Dean, Teaching and Learning. Meetings with members of the Department of Languages and Literatures included Maria Joao Dodman, Chair of the Program; Ahouva Shulman, Undergraduate Program Director; John Picchione, Coordinator Italian Section. Meetings were also held with the following groups: full-time faculty of the Italian Section, part-time faculty members, and undergraduate students. The following individuals from the University Libraries were also consulted: Jack Leong (AD, Research & Open Scholarship), Patti Ryan (Content Development and Analysis Department) and Peggy Warren (Student Learning & Academic Success Department).

OUTCOME:

The Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance received the Program and Decanal responses to the recommendations and has approved an implementation plan.

A report on the progress of the initiatives undertaken in response to recommendations in general and as specified in the implementation plan will be provided in the Follow-up Report which will be due in December 2023, 18 months after the review of this report by the York University Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance.

The next Cyclical Program Review will begin in the Fall of 2027 with a site visit expected in the Fall of 2028 or Winter of 2029.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND STRENGTHS:

The Italian Section of the Department of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics began offering a Major and a Minor program in 1977. In 1982, an Italian linguistics component was added and a Specialized Honours program was established. In 1981, it pioneered York's study abroad option with the Summer Studies in Italy, a six-week program in Florence and Rome, comprised of courses in language, literature, and culture.

The reviewers noted that, "Library resources and in-course supports for the Section are well established, including texts, e-books, digital materials, and films/videos required for Italian cinema courses. York University is involved in the Italian-Canadian Archives Project; this affiliation offers potential research opportunities for upper level Italian Studies students. "

As a result of the decline in enrolments over the past 10 years, driven primarily by societal factors beyond the control of the Department, there is now, as described by the reviewers, ".....a discrepancy between the description of the program curriculum and structure and the reality of courses offered.the Italian Studies Program now

comprises 10 courses. Of these 10 courses, 4 are offerings in basic language”. Students wishing to major in Italian studies find it challenging to find enough courses to complete the degree. Furthermore, students pursuing Italian Studies are often in classes with students taking courses to satisfy General Education requirements.

The reviewers provide numerous suggestions for the enhancement of the curriculum given the current situation as well as comments on the importance of the study abroad option. Finally, although out of scope for this exercise, the reviewers have specific recommendations about how the program could be resourced.

The Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, in his reply to the reviewer recommendations and program responses, asks that the program focus on a digital learning strategy and actively contribute to departmental initiatives for programs in global languages and culture.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The chart below lays out the implementation plan approved by the Joint Sub-Committee at its meeting in May 2022.

	Recommendation	Action	Responsible for Follow-up	Timeline
1.a	That Italian Studies courses be made more accessible to non-majors.	The program coordinator should be the lead proponent on one focused initiative — the development of online and blended versions of key courses alongside a digital learning strategy for the teaching of those courses.	Program Coordinator, Chair, UPD, Offices of the Associate Dean Teaching & Learning and Associate Dean Programs. The Teaching Commons, as needed.	The Digital Learning Strategy should be developed in Fall of 2022 with supporting activities completed so this can take effect for Fall 2023
1.b	That General Education courses be redesigned for larger enrolments.	No Action to be taken. The Dean and the Program are concerned about the recruitment of qualified instructors and TAs to support such an initiative.	n/a	n/a
1.c	That double majors be vigorously promoted.	No Action to be taken at this time. The Dean agrees with the spirit of this recommendation but suggests caution and measured expectations. Very few students at York opt to complete degree combinations of any kind. Of that small number, double majors are of the least popular degree combination.	See 1.a	See 1.a
1.d	That experiential education opportunities be developed at the third- and fourth-year levels.	No Action to be taken at this time. The Dean agrees with the spirit of the recommendation but is concerned that the development, delivery, and maintenance of high-quality experiential learning opportunities in	See 1.a	See 1.a

		courses is resource-heavy and beyond the scope of what the Faculty can support in terms of immediate next steps for the program.		
1.e	That online language course offerings be expanded and an eLearning strategy be developed.	No Action to be taken other than that outlined in 1.a of this plan.	See 1.a	See 1.a
1.f	That Italian Studies, together with others in Department of Linguistics, Literatures and Linguistics, explore the possibility of establishing a new program in Global Languages and Culture.	Continue collaboration with development of the already proposed Certificate in Languages and Culture.	Coordinator of Italian Studies to work with proponent of the proposed certificate.	December 2022: DLL to submit proposal for a new certificate in Global Languages and Cultures to the Faculty curriculum committee for review.
2.a	Delist courses not offered and update calendar copy.	Continue with review of Italian Studies courses and proposals to delist courses that are no longer part of the curriculum.	Program coordinator, curriculum staff in LAPS	To be completed in the 2021-2022 cycle for program approval governance.
2.b	That literature-based courses centered on canonical authors be discontinued or redesigned.	No action to be taken aside from possible delisting or reactivation of lapsed courses.	See 2.a	Ongoing, as need and time allows.
3	Re-examine Study Abroad options for Italian Studies.	No action to be taken. The Dean's office has revitalized the LA&PS Study Abroad initiative. Courses are required to be taught by full-time Faculty; resources not sufficient in the program for this.	n/a	n/a
4.a	That short-term contractual	No action to be taken. Complement	n/a	n/a

	hires be considered to enable initiatives listed above.	renewal in Italian Studies not under consideration at this time.		
4.b	That a long-term hiring strategy and contingencies for such be established.	No action to be taken. Complement renewal in Italian Studies not under consideration at this time.	n/a	n/a
5.a	That Italian Studies engage in a marketing and communications strategy to internal and external communities.	No further action to be taken. All LAPS program websites have been revamped; program coordinator actively participates in centralized recruitment initiatives. Further activities may be beyond available program resources.	n/a	n/a
5.b	That the department explore advancement and development opportunities with the central Office of Institutional Advancement, including the establishment of an advisory board.	No action to be taken. Over the long term, it may be deleterious to try to establish or promote these relationships if they cannot be sustained.	n/a	n/a
6	That Italian Studies rebuild community and forge a common vision and purpose beyond meetings with the Department of Language and Literatures.	No action to be taken. Culture and morale have improved over the recent period.	n/a	n/a