

# **YORK UNIVERSITY**

Final Assessment Report – Executive Summary

## **Linguistics, Undergraduate (BA)**

Department of Languages, Literature & Linguistics  
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:**

BA

**Reviewers appointed by the Vice-Provost Academic:**

Dr. John Alderete, Professor, Simon Fraser University, Linguistics/Cognitive Science

Dr. Jeff Good, Professor, University at Buffalo, Linguistics

Dr. Jacob Beck, Associate Professor, York University, Philosophy/Cognitive Science

**Cyclical Program Review Key Milestones:**

Cyclical Program Review launch: September 19, 2019

Self-study submitted to Vice-Provost Academic: June 25, 2021

Date of the Site Visit: October 13, 2021

Review Report received: December 6, 2021

Program Response received: February 17, 2022

Dean's Response received: March 31, 2022

Implementation Plan and FAR approved by Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance, November 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: October 13, 2021**

A virtual site visit for the undergraduate Linguistics program in the Faculty of Liberal Arts & Professional Studies (LA&PS) was held in conjunction with the visits for the Linguistics and Applied Linguistics graduate program in LA&PS and the Linguistics and Languages Studies program at Glendon. Meetings for the Linguistics program were held with the following individuals and groups:

- Vice-Provost Academic, Lyndon Martin
- Dean of Graduate Studies, Tom Loebel
- Dean of the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies, JJ McMurtry
- Associate Deans Sean Kheraj and Anita Lam
- Chair of the Linguistics Department, Maria Joao Dodman
- Undergraduate Program Director, Chandan Narayan
- Librarian, Teaching and Learning Norda Bell, Associate Dean Research and Open Scholarship Jack Leong, and Director, Content Development and Analysis Department Patti Ryan
- Administrative Coordinator Josie Sansonetti
- Full-time faculty members
- Part-time Instructors
- Students

## **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 18 months after the review of this report by the York University Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance (in May 2024). 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 undergraduate Linguistics program, housed in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics (DLLL) in LA&PS, currently offers courses in linguistics leading to a BA, Honours BA, and Specialized Honours BA. The program aims to offer a solid foundation in core linguistics as well as exposure to more interdisciplinary areas, such as sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics. It aims to lay the foundation for graduate study in fields such as linguistics, speech-language pathology, audiology, translation studies and TESOL as well as offer a range of courses attractive to non-majors that instill a general awareness of language and linguistics. Finally, it aims to maintain an inclusive curriculum in which students of all backgrounds and physical abilities can freely participate and which actively develops an appreciation of the social and linguistic

experiences of diverse groups.

Linguistics courses also form an integral part of the Certificate in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL), which allows students to gain professional training at the same time as they complete their degree programs.

As of September 2021, the Linguistics unit will also be adding a new program in Speech and Language Sciences to its offerings, which will lead to a Specialized Honours BA Degree.

The external reviewers commented that “The degree-granting programs offered in DLLL provide a solid core of linguistic science in addition to areas of specialization (e.g., sociolinguistics) and opportunities for advanced study and training (e.g., speech-language pathology). While this is perhaps self-evident to most linguists, linguistic investigation is a natural fit within a larger liberal arts education because inquiry-based learning, argumentation, and developing analytical skills are fundamental to what linguists do, as cogently explained in the self-study”.

The reviewers also noted that the methods and criteria for assessing student achievement are clearly defined, pointing out that the “program also has a range of developed assessment strategies involving creativity, novelty in linguistic investigations, and experiential project-based work that ensure deep and productive assessment of student achievement”.

The reviewers recommend further curricular development aimed at increasing program access and flexibility, and the recommendations and detailed comments in the review report give concrete suggestions for the program to consider. The reviewers noted, “Curricular development in courses related to language and technology seem particularly important to relevance, especially given the opportunities for employment and partnerships with technology companies in the burgeoning tech sector in Toronto.”

The reviewers also indicated that “faculty renewal is a major issue as many Faculty reach retirement age or take administrative positions that prevent them from teaching and advising students.”

The program’s culture and the intimacy that students share with program faculty also stood out to the reviewers. They noted that students have a variety of opportunities through inquiry-based learning to work closely with the faculty at all levels, and the results of the student survey show that the students see a clear connection between this coursework and student success. The high degree of satisfaction with the student experience was clear and the reviewers said the following about their in-person meeting with students: “We were quite impressed with how elegantly and emphatically students expressed this satisfaction. Whatever it is that program faculty are doing, they really deserve recognition for this success.”

## IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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

	Recommendation	Action	Responsible for Follow-up	Timeline
1.	That the curriculum be systematically reviewed, including the option to create a one semester foundations course, and the examination of the tiering of upper- and lower-year courses.	The Linguistics program should proceed with curricular changes required to update LING1000 and related program requirements, including 2000- and 2000-level core courses.	UPD Linguistics; Associate Dean, Programs; Associate Director, LAPS Curriculum	Discussions on plans for curriculum changes to be completed by end of Winter 2023. Curricular work underway in Summer and Fall 2023 terms.
2.	That the curriculum be reviewed to seek out opportunities to expand, adapt and enhance experiential learning opportunities.	The program should review and map experiential education components and identify opportunities for expansion, particularly in the area of work-integrated learning (WIL).	UPD Linguistics; LAPS Associate Director, Experiential Education	Review and plan for expansion of EE opportunities to be completed by end of Summer 2023 term.
3.	That the curriculum and program structures be reviewed and a plan formulated to enhance relevance of program learning outcomes for jobs of the future.	The Linguistics UPD should collaborate with Experiential Education staff on the development of co-curricular activities and how best to leverage existing supports. In addition, the program should work with the Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs on a faculty renewal plan that supports the above	UPD Linguistics; Associate Dean, Programs; Associate Director, Experiential Education; Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs	Plan for co-curricular programing to be completed by end of Summer 2023 term.  Hiring priorities plan to be completed in consultation with the Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs by end of Fall 2023 term.

		and pedagogical expertise in WIL.		
4.	That a faculty renewal plan be developed for the next seven years, at both the undergraduate and graduate levels.	The Linguistics program should develop a longer-term faculty complement plan, in consultation with Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs. The plan should be focused on strategic areas critical to both research and teaching in the program.	UPD Linguistics; Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs	Hiring priorities plan to be completed in consultation with the Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs by end of Fall 2023 term.
5.	That the question of establishing a separate Linguistics department in LA&PS be considered.	Academic leaders in the Department of Languages, Literatures and Linguistics should meet with the Dean, Vice-Dean, and Associate Dean Faculty Affairs to consult on the process and develop an ad hoc committee to draft a work plan.	Chair of Department of Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics; UPD Linguistics; UPD DLLL; Dean; Vice Dean; Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs	Initial meetings with the Dean's Office and creation of ad hoc committee by end of Winter 2023. Work plan for creating the new academic unit to be drafted by end of Fall 2023.
6.	That coordination between the LA&PS and Glendon Linguistics programs be enhanced.	LA&PS Linguistics should proceed with updates to its website, supplemental calendar, and advising sections, ensuring explicit information about the relationship between LA&PS and Glendon programs is available to students.	UPD Linguistics LA&PS, Coordinator of Linguistics & Language Studies Glendon	Updates to the website and supplemental calendar to be drafted by end of Winter 2023.