

YORK UNIVERSITY

Final Assessment Report – Executive Summary

History, Undergraduate (BA, iBA)

Cross-Disciplinary Certificate in Public History

(in collaboration with Glendon College/ Collège universitaire Glendon)

Cyclical Program Review – 2013 to 2021

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History, Graduate (MA, PhD)

Cyclical Program Review – 2014 to 2021

Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies

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

Program(s) Reviewed:

BA, iBA, Cross-Disciplinary Certificate in Public History
MA, PhD

Reviewers appointed by the Vice-Provost Academic:

Dr. Nathalie Kermaal, Professor and Associate Dean (Academic), Faculty of Native Studies, University of Alberta

Dr. Sandra den Otter, Professor, Department of History, and Vice Provost International, Queen's University

Dr. Jean Michel Montsion, Associate Professor, Canadian Studies Program, Department of Multidisciplinary Studies, Glendon College, York University

Cyclical Program Review Key Milestones:

Cyclical Program Review launch: September 16, 2020

Self-study submitted to Vice-Provost Academic: December 3 (UG) & 15 (GR), 2021

Date of the Site Visit: March 29-30, 2022

Review Report received: April 18, 2022

Program Response received: June 2, 2022

Dean's Response received: September 8, 2022

Implementation Plan and FAR received by Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance, March 2023.



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

This review was conducted under the York University Quality Assurance Procedures, August 2020.

SITE VISIT: March 29-30, 2022

The virtual site visit of the History programs in the Faculty of Liberal Arts and Professional Studies (LA&PS) took place in conjunction with the review of the history department at Glendon College. Interviews related to the programs in LA&PS consisted of interviews with the following individuals and groups:

- Vice-Provost Academic Lyndon Martin
- Dean and Associate Vice-President Graduate Studies Thomas Loebel
- LA&PS Dean J.J. McMurty
- LA&PS Associate Dean Research and Graduate Studies Ravi de Costa
- LA&PS Vice Dean Programs Sean Kheraj
- LA&PS Associate Dean Teaching and Learning Anita Lam
- Chair, LA&PS Department of History Stephen Brooke
- Undergraduate Program Director, LA&PS, Kathryn McPherson
- Graduate Program Director Jennifer Stephen
- Full-time faculty from LA&PS undergraduate and graduate programs
- Part-time faculty (teaching assistants and course directors), including one participant from the Glendon history program
- Undergraduate students
- PhD students (in-person meeting)
- Associate Dean of Libraries Jack Leong and Director of Content Development and Analysis at the Scott Library, Patti Ryan
- Departmental administrative staff and graduate program assistant Karen Dancy

The reviewers also received written comments from MA students after the virtual visit was complete.

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 September 2024).

The next Cyclical Program Review will begin in the Fall of 2028 with a site visit expected in the Fall of 2029 or Winter of 2030.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND STRENGTHS

The History Department was among the first established at York University. The current undergraduate program in History in LA&PS was established in 2009 following the amalgamation of the Faculty of Arts and the Atkinson School of Liberal and Professional Studies. Students may pursue programs leading to an Honours BA or Honour IBA or a

90-credit BA. Students can also opt to pursue a double major with other majors in LA&PS or an Honours minor option. Since 2018, the Program has also offered a Cross-Disciplinary Certificate in Public History, open to all York undergrads in good standing.

The Graduate Program in History embraces a wide range of geographical and thematic areas of historical research. Long known for its strength in Canadian History, York also has other areas of research and supervisory depth in geographic and thematic areas. The Graduate Program in History offers two programs, the Master of Arts (MA) and the Doctor of Philosophy (PhD). The program was established 1968 and admitted its first students at both the MA and PhD level in the fall of 1969.

The reviewers noted in their report that the History program at York was ranked #6 as one of the best places to study history in Canada¹. They went on to state, “The cyclical review and interviews during the visit (including with students) attest to the high quality of its instructors and its curriculum, the collegiality and the support offered to new faculty and students as well as its excellence in research.”

The curriculum was described by the reviewers as a well thought-out and providing “space for innovation and a way to respond to new and important areas of historical inquiry: Indigenous history, environmental history, public history and global history. As well, the thematic areas of indigeneity, gender and sexuality, social, political, cultural and environmental concerns open up a wide range of possibilities for exploring intersectional history to study the past and its methods.” The Department has also responded to the calls to action of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) through curriculum changes and their collaboration with the History of Indigenous People (HIP) Network.

The Cross-Disciplinary Certificate in Public History, created in 2018, emphasizes experiential education and offers undergraduate students internships at provincial archives, galleries and museums.

The reviewers noted the significant scholarly achievements of York faculty members who teach in the graduate program and supervise students. Many graduates have also continued on to tenure-track teaching positions and have received accolades for their research.

With regard to the undergraduate curriculum, the reviewers suggest that the program could emphasize more the transferable skills students develop through their studies. The reviewers also note the need for better clarity and collaboration with the History Department at Glendon to allow for better flexibility for students to take courses in either program based on interests and particular faculty expertise in a certain area.

The reviewers indicate that the time to completion in the PhD program is longer than at peer institutions and suggest that a review of requirements and the timing of core

¹ <https://www.universitymagazine.ca/the-best-history-schools-in-canada-2021/>

elements in the doctoral program would be beneficial, especially of the comprehensive examinations. An exploration of the current fields and opportunities for reorganization should be undertaken, including the formal addition of a field in Indigenous Studies. The number of directed reading courses in the graduate program seems relatively high and the reviewers note the workload this presents for faculty members. They suggest alternatives for the development of critical capacities and verbal skills.

The reviewers note that the highly ranked History department, while facing challenges like most disciplines in the Humanities and Social Sciences, has been productive in finding pathways to address declining enrolments and budget models tied to enrolment. The reviewers provide the recommendations below to continue support for the excellent History programs offered at York University.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The chart below lays out the implementation plan approved by the Joint Sub-Committee at its meeting in March 2023.

	Recommendation	Action	Responsible for Follow-up	Timeline
1	That new hires for History be prioritized to ensure the ongoing quality of the program.	See response to 1a below.		
1a	That a targeted Indigenous hire be made. In addition, an appointment should be made in a thematic, geographic and chronological area to support the needs of graduate teaching and supervision.	The faculty complement renewal plan including the 3-year hiring plan should continue to be developed.	Chair, Department of History Associate Dean, Faculty Affairs Dean, LA&PS	Ongoing
1b	That a Canada Research Chair in Digital Humanities be situated in the History Department.	See response to 1a above.		
2	That the graduate program in history formally add the field of Indigenous History to the graduate program.	The program should continue its review of fields, as well as the addition of an Indigenous Field, following the established curricular governance processes.	Graduate Program Director, Graduate Executive, Associate Dean Graduate	Discussion to take place in Winter 2023. Resulting curricular proposals to come forward in 2023-2024.
3	That the program explore ways of consolidating and broadening the Certificate in Public History, including through the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Courses counting towards the certificate should be consistently offered every year. 	The Department regularly offers designated courses that can be considered as part of the public history certificate. In addition, the program should: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Develop a strategic plan for the various ways to expand public 	Chair of History Department, Undergraduate Program Director, Coordinator, Certificate in Public History, Associate Dean,	Strategic plan to be developed by the end of Fall 2023. Review of work-integrated learning opportunities to

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A CRC in Digital Humanities should support development of a digital history aspect of the certificate. • Indigenous history and global history components should be incorporated into the certificate. • Internships should be expanded to include community organizations, banks and businesses. 	<p>history and work-integrated learning.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of the strategic plan, consider incorporating digital public history, expanding indigenous content and placements, and solidifying global history content and placements. • Undertake an assessment of work-integrated learning opportunities for history majors and how to expand them (within and beyond the certificate.) 	<p>Programs, Associate Director, Faculty Curriculum, Associate Director, Experiential Education</p>	<p>be completed by the end of Fall 2023.</p>
4	<p>That the Department continue to explore curricular innovation, including the potential development of new certificates and/or micro-credentials in the Department or in collaboration with other units.</p>	<p>The Department should continue to explore curricular innovation options, including opportunities afforded by the creation of new courses.</p>	<p>Chair of History Department, Undergraduate Program Director, Associate Dean, Programs, Associate Director, Faculty Curriculum</p>	<p>Winter and Summer 2023 and ongoing</p>
5	<p>That the Department collaborate with the History Department at Glendon to allow for better flexibility for students to take courses in either program based on interests and particular faculty expertise.</p>	<p>The Department should continue to explore collaborative options with Glendon.</p>	<p>Department Chairs and faculty members, LA&PS and Glendon</p>	<p>Winter 2023 and ongoing</p>