

YORK UNIVERSITY

Final Assessment Report, Executive Summary

Music, Graduate (MA, PhD)

**School of the Arts, Media, Performance and
Design**

Cyclical Program Review – 2012 to 2022

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

Program(s) Reviewed:

MA
PhD

Reviewers appointed by the Vice-Provost Academic:

Dr. Kevin Swinden, Associate Dean, Faculty of Music-Planning and Curriculum,
Associate Professor, Music Theory, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario

Dr. Lori Burns, Full Professor, School of Music, Faculty of Arts, University of Ottawa,
Ontario

Dr. Molly Ladd-Taylor, Full Professor, Department of History, Faculty of Liberal Arts and
Professional Studies, York University, Ontario

Cyclical Program Review Key Milestones:

Cyclical Program Review launch: September 15, 2021

Self-study submitted to Vice-Provost Academic: January 17, 2023

Date of the Site Visit: April 10-11, 2023

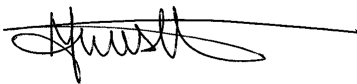
Review Report received: May 17, 2023

Program Response received: July 20, 2023

Dean's Response received: August 23, 2023

Implementation Plan and FAR received by Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance,
November 6, 2023' revised version confirmed on December 4, 2023.

Submitted by Marcia Anisette, Vice-Provost Academic, York University



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

SITE VISIT: April 10-11, 2023

The virtual visit was organized around a set of interviews with the following individuals: Vice-Provost Academic, Lyndon Martin, Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies, Thomas Lobel, AMPD Dean, Sarah Bay-Cheng, AMPD Associate Dean Academic Michael Darroch and Associate Dean Research, Laura Levi, Music Chair, Karen Burke, Graduate Program Director, Stephanie Martin, and two University librarians. The reviewers met with full-time faculty in the undergraduate and graduate programs, a group of part-time (contract) faculty, undergraduate students and a group of MA and PhD students. Discussions were also held with departmental administrative staff.

The reviewers were not able to tour the physical spaces for ensemble rehearsals, teaching studios, labs or performance spaces.

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 (June, 2025) 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 2029 with a site visit expected in the Fall of 2030 or Winter of 2031.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND STRENGTHS

The Department of Music is one of seven academic units within the School of Arts, Media, Performance and Design (Dance; Design; Digital Media; Film; Theatre; Visual Arts and Art History). The Music Department was formed in 1969 and the undergraduate program operates interdependently with the Graduate Program in Music. The Graduate Program in Music offers an MA and a PhD with six fields: Composition, Ethnomusicology, Jazz, Musicology, Performance, and Popular Music Studies. However, the program currently understands its offerings as falling into two major thematic strands: composition and studies (musicology/ethnomusicology) The MA was first offered in 1975 and the PhD was implemented in 1993. Students may also pursue a joint MA/MBA with the Schulich School of Business.

The reviewers highlight several strengths, noting that “One of York’s most distinguishing and differentiating opportunities is the enviable collection of world music instruments and access to authentic instruction on these instruments.” As well, the reviewers also note that the Department very clearly supports EDI initiatives.

The reviewers’ report also included some opportunities for improvement. The reviewers note that that the programs reflect an interest in the social and cultural aspects of music as well as the capacity for advanced technologies; however, they suggest that clarity is required for how the formally approved streams, pathways, thematic strands, and

concentrations are connected. The reviewers recommend that the program's "graduate fields should be consolidated and perhaps reimagined based on professorial expertise of the current faculty complement." Future hiring plans would consider how to bolster and support these fields. The reviewers' report also provides insight into potential clusters to which all current faculty could contribute.

There is an opportunity to review enrolment data and establish a list of courses that are grounded in strategic clusters. The reviewers suggest course offerings could be concept-or method-driven and draw on a variety of repertoires. This approach may reduce the reliance on independent studies to complete program requirements. Clarity about the fields of study would also alleviate this strain which, while providing flexibility for students, is not sustainable.

While the reviewers note that the Major Research Paper (MRP), "is well conceived as a common requirement for all MA students," clearer communication about the timelines for completion for students would be helpful. The reviewers further note that PhD students appear to be challenged to complete the program within 6 years.

Noting that "it is not reasonable for all courses to accomplish all outcomes," the reviewers encourage the graduate program to review the graduate program learning outcomes and analyse how actual courses and course assessments contribute to the learning outcomes.

The reviewers suggest the Department explore additional links to performance and composition-based organizations in the GTA. They state, "Alliances with external partners could lead to an enhance series of visitors to the program," and note that this may enhance the recruitment of students.

Noting the downwards trend in admissions for both programs, the reviewers indicate that admission requirements for both the MA and PhD are well defined and standard. Admission to the PhD has been paused for 2023 and 2024 and is of concern to some students in the MA program.

In terms of staffing and workload, the reviewers note in their report that, "supervision is not evenly distributed across faculty members and there are many early career scholars who should be given the opportunity to begin supervision." While the administrative staff appear to operate as a strong collegial unit, the reviewers note a gap in the support for the recent growth in intersecting labs for the performing Arts courses, Digital Music and Music for Media. The report suggests that consistent support should be provided by a technologist rather than faculty if this is a direction that is to be maintained and expanded.

Finally, the review report notes the difficult budgetary situation that forces the department to mount concerts in "an acoustically impoverished lounge space," because

the Department's finances do not allow for the cost of using the Faculty recital hall for faculty and student performances.

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

	Recommendation	Action	Responsible for Follow-up	Timeline
1.	That the fields in the graduate music programs be consolidated to maximize York's faculty and areas of excellence.	The graduate programs will contribute to the articulation of a Departmental Strategic Vision and Plan, outlining the priorities and key areas of development, with a focus on the consolidation and streamlining of its graduate offerings, the distinctions of its graduate programs among other programs, and professional outcomes for graduate students. .	Graduate Program Director	Fall 2023/2024 and continuing as needed.
2.	That learning outcomes for the identified options in the graduate program be established and courses reviewed and refined to serve the advancing of those outcomes.	Once areas of focus have been clarified and learning outcomes refined as part of the Strategic Visioning process, the program will review and/or revisit course offerings to ensure alignment with the updated learning outcomes. Courses to be discontinued will be identified. The program will explore ways to capitalize on existing graduate offerings in the department and make more use of existing resources, including, for	Associate Dean Research, AMPD Graduate Program Director Graduate Executive	Immediate start in Fall 2023/2024

		example, the existing pan-AMPD research course / colloquium. .		
3.	That graduate requirements for the MRP, comprehensive exams and dissertation be consolidated, and language requirements be revised. Communications with students should be consolidated into a graduate student handbook.	The program will, through its Strategic Visioning exercise, consolidate requirements for the MRP, comprehensive exams, and dissertation, and develop a mechanism (for example, a graduate handbook) for clearly communicating these and other program requirements, expectations, and timelines. to students.	Graduate Program Director	Immediate start in Fall 2023/2024; completion by June 2024.
4.	That a stronger emphasis on research, including grant applications, be fostered in the Music Department.	The program will explore and report on efforts to enhance the research culture in the program, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • increasing research intensity to provide models for students • offering grant-writing workshops 	Graduate Program Director Associate Dean Research	Immediate start and increasing through Fall/Winter 2023/2024

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • providing support for students for academic conferences and publishing • including students in research and other scholarly activities • encouraging students to join associated ORUs 		
5.	That additional strategic partnerships within the GTA and with international music programs be established.	Partnerships will be considered as part of the Department's strategic plan and vision exercise, after which a potential list can be developed.	Graduate Program Director Music Department Executive	List prepared to allow outreach to begin in the 2024/2025 academic year.
6.	Recommendations that relate to both graduate and undergraduate programs			
6a)	That support for student concerts in an appropriate space be a priority.	Refer to Undergraduate FAR	n/a	n/a
6b)	That The Tribute Communities Recital Hall be made accessible and the martin Family Lounge be retrofitted for performance.	Refer to Undergraduate FAR	n/a	n/a
7.	That the Digital Music Initiative be appropriately supported.	New areas of expertise (such as digital music and digital distribution) will be considered in the development of the Department's vision and	Graduate Program Director Associate Dean Research Director, Sensorium	To begin in 2023/2024 and ongoing.

		<p>strategic plan and included in future complement planning.</p> <p>The program will determine available resources for Music graduate students in this area, consulting with the Associate Dean, Research and the Sensorium Director as appropriate.</p>		
8.	That an academic advisor with music expertise be relocated in the Department.	Communications with graduate students will be enhanced. (see Recommendation 3)	See Recommendation 3 above	See Recommendation 3 above
9.	That the program continues efforts to support PhD students with a goal to resuming admissions to the PhD program.	In addition to the efforts described by the program, the Dean will provide guidance about additional action related to research and supervisory goals for new and continuing faculty.	Dean, Graduate Program Director	To begin in Fall 2023 and continue.