

YORK UNIVERSITY

Final Assessment Report, Executive Summary

Music, Undergraduate (BFA, BA)

**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:

Bachelor of Fine Arts Honours (BFA Hon)
Bachelor of Honours (BA Hon)
Bachelor of Arts (BA)

Reviewers appointed by the Vice-Provost Academic:

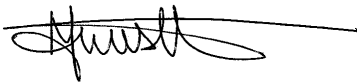
Dr. Kevin Swinden, Associate Dean, Faculty of Music-Planning and Curriculum,
Associate Professor, Music Theory, Wilfrid Laurier University, Waterloo, Ontario
Dr. Lori Burns, Full Professor, School of Music, Faculty of Arts, University of Ottawa,
Ontario
Dr. Molly Ladd-Taylor, Full Professor, Department 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 confirmed by Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance,
November 6, 2023.

Submitted by Marcia Annisette, 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 (May, 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 undergraduate program creatively weaves jazz, non-Western and Western classical music into a curriculum that balances performance with scholarship and composition, which leads to a Bachelor of Fine Arts Honours (BFA Hon), Bachelor of Arts Honours (BA Hon) and Bachelor of Arts (BA) degree.

The Department self-study states that, “the undergraduate curriculum is based on performance, studies, and composition in the areas of jazz, Western art music, and world music, also including courses in contemporary improvisation, digital and film composition, music education and popular music. Rather than defining sets of prescribed paths for music majors (e.g., jazz performance), the program allows students to follow their own pathway following two years of core requirements in theory/musicianship and an overview of the cultural study of music.”

The reviewers note that the program honours principles of diversity and inclusion, introducing world music courses from the first year to decenter Western art music as the only pathway for academic study. The reviewers note, “The department’s institutional proposition to decenter western classical music within a broader study of global musics is laudable, and the infrastructure and exceptional resources of world music instruments and practitioners that the department has built over time is enviable.” The reviewers state, “York has a program that is uniquely poised in Ontario, and perhaps in the Canadian landscape, to deliver an exceptional and forward-looking music curriculum,” and recommend “that York intentionally...devote its energy and resources in a way that will position York as the model for what a diverse and decolonized music curriculum can be.” They further note, “one of York’s most distinguishing and differentiating opportunities is its enviable collection of world music instruments and the access to authentic instruction on these instruments that is available in the GTA. This is a critical differentiator for York and a resource that needs to be supported, even if there are costs associated with the delivery of the world music ensembles.”

The reviewers note that greater clarity could be provided to students to ensure that student’s expectations are well-aligned with the program’s offerings. The efforts to sustain the nine to eleven distinct specializations described by the Department are not sustainable, even though some are only minimally differentiated from each other. The reviewers suggest creating clusters as a way to reduce the number of streams and creating foundational course requirements addressing common elements of several specializations.

Regarding the three research chairs in community music, jazz, and music and computational arts, the reviewers note that these offer excellent opportunities for the Department and suggest that they be adequately mobilized and supported to attract research in these areas. New hires in the department should be supported to seek membership in the Faculty of Graduate studies and begin supervisory activities with graduate students. At the same time, the reviewers suggest that senior faculty members engage further with the undergraduate program.

In their summary, the reviewers stated, “York is blessed with an exceptional faculty complement who are deeply committed to their students and to the stewardship of a long-standing and important music program in Ontario,” noting also that part-time faculty are just as highly engaged.

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

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

	Recommendation	Action	Responsible for Follow-up	Timeline
1.	That the program move towards a set of clearly defined areas and review the core requirements as well as other courses that contribute to the program.	The Department will articulate a Departmental Strategic Vision and Plan, outlining the priorities and key areas of focus and development, focusing on a small number of clearly defined areas of study.	Department Chair, Executive Committee, Department faculty members (undergraduate and graduate) Associate Dean Academic	Strategic Vision Document to be submitted to Dean's Office by September 2024.
2.	That all students be assured of the opportunity to develop a portfolio of work.	The program will explore York-wide capstone opportunities and collaborations with other Faculties as well as the Carswell Chair for Engaged Research in the Arts. Students should be advised of the new e-portfolio being developed for all AMPD students, as well as the option for audio recording through the Music Technology position.	Chair, Department of Music Area Coordinators, Music Associate Dean Academic Carswell Chair	Information to be shared with students in Fall 2023, other developments through 2024/2025.
3. a)	That the program proceed with the required ensemble course.	The program will monitor enrolments and other student outcomes in light of the new required ensemble course. Interdisciplinary study options (other than the "in/out" credits) will be explored and	Chair, Department of Music Dean's Office.	September 2024 for initial review of outcomes. Annual review over degree cycle (four years) ongoing.

		reported on by September 2024.		
3. b)	That the program consider streamlining degree options to offer only the Specialized Honours BFA and the 90-credit BA studies program.	The program will include discussions about the streamlining of degree options as part of the discussion leading to a Strategic Vision and Plan, with the goal of making a decision about how to proceed in this regard.	Chair, Department of Music Music Department Executive Associate Dean Academic, as needed	Strategic Vision plan due by September 2024; implementation of potential changes to be effective Fall 2026.
4. a)	That AMPD design meaningful inter-departmental courses.	The Department will explore collaboration with other AMPD departments regarding the development of collaborative and/or interdepartmental courses. This will be included in the Strategic Vision and Plan	Chair, Department of Music Music Executive Other AMPD Department Chairs	Strategic Vision Plan due by September 2024; Implementation in Fall 2025 or as soon as approval process permits.
4. b)	That the barrier preventing Music from offering Gen Ed courses be removed.	The program will explore the possibility of collaborating with other AMPD departments to develop proposals for General Education courses to be presented to other Faculties.	Various AMPD Departments, department members Other Faculties	Proposal within 2 to 3 years, assuming there is interest from other Faculties.
5. a)	That recruitment efforts include high impact events for potential undergraduate students with a focus on personal connections.	The Department will continue recruitment efforts that have demonstrated success and work to include key messages from the new Strategic Vision and Plan.	Chair, Department of Music Chair, Audition/Recruitment Committee AMPD Communications team	2023/24: continue recruitment efforts and incorporate new messaging from Strategic Vision and Plan into recruitment efforts for Fall 2025 (activities through 2024/2025)

5. b)	That relevant data on retention be gathered through exit surveys of student who leave the program.	The Department will explore methods for collecting retention data, including the possibility of consultation with the Division of Students. A plan for collecting retention data will be included in the Strategic Vision and Plan.	Chair, Department of Music Dean's Office, AMPD Division of Students	Plan for inclusion in Strategic Vision and Plan, September 2024; implementation through to 2025/2026.
6. a)	That funding for programming in the Tribute Communities Recital Hall be reviewed.	The Dean's Office will collect and share comparative funding models at other universities and review implementation options with Music and other performing arts departments. A plan will be created for the integration of music technology and audio engineering students to support performance facilities.	Chair, Department of Music Faculty members Dean's Office Head of Facilities Executive Officer	Information gathering and sharing through 2023/2024. Integration of plans into the Strategic Vision Plan for implementation in 2025/2026
6. b)	That the Martin Family Lounge be retrofitted for performances.	The Department will include suggestions for the Martin Family Lounge in the Strategic Vision and Plan, after consulting with other performance programs and the Dean's Office.	Chair, Department of Music Dean's Office Other performing arts programs	Information gathering and sharing through 2023/2024. Incorporate suggestions for the MFL Strategic Vision plan for Fall 2024.
7.	That resources to support Digital Music be reallocated from existing or underperforming programs.	As part of the Strategic Vision and Plan, the Department will consider how Digital Music fits with the range of program areas offered.	Chair, Department of Music Executive Committee, Music Others as determined by the plan	Strategic Vision Plan for Fall 2024; implementation of initiatives identified through 2025/2026.

8	That an academic advisor with music expertise be located in the Department.	The Department will continue with streamlining of programs. A dedicated advisor is not feasible and does not fit with recognized best practices for holistic advising.	n/a	n/a
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