

Final Assessment Report

Applied Disability Studies

Graduate Programs

(reviewed 2024/25)

A. Summary

1. The Department's Self-Study was considered and approved by the Senate Academic Review Committee January 9, 2025.
2. The Review Committee consisted of two external reviewers: Tim Vollmer (University of Florida) and Brenda Bassingthwaite (University of Nebraska), and one internal reviewer, Michael O'Sullivan (Brock University).
3. The site visit occurred March 26-27, 2025.
4. The Reviewers' Report was received April 25, 2025.
5. The Senate Graduate Studies Committee response was received May 16, 2025
6. The Department response was received May 23, 2025.
7. The Dean, Faculty of Social Sciences, response was received June 17, 2025.
8. The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs response was received July 7, 2025.
9. Annual Implementation Reports will be submitted from 2026-2029.
10. The next Cyclical Academic Review is scheduled to take place in 2032/2033.

The Self-Study was prepared under the conditions of the Codicil with the Review and responses conducted under the terms and conditions of the June 2023 IQAP.

Program Outcome Categories:

Based on their knowledge of the discipline, the content of the Self-Study and the interviews conducted during the site visit, the Review Committee gave the programs the following Outcome Categories:

Program(s)	Excellent Quality	Good Quality	Good Quality with Concerns	Non-Viable
Master of Arts in Applied Disability Studies (MA)	X			
Master of Applied Disability Studies (MADS)		X		
Graduate Diploma in Applied Disability Studies		X		
<i>If you have chosen 'Good Quality with Concerns', please summarize the specific concern(s) briefly below. If you have chosen 'Non-Viable', please summarize the specific reason(s) below.</i>				

Executive Summary:

The Reviewers wrote:

The review of the Applied Disability Studies (ADS) graduate programs at Brock University, conducted in March 2025, affirms that the Master of Arts (MA) is of *Excellent Quality* and the Master of Applied Disability Studies (MADS), and Graduate Diploma programs are of *Good Quality* and align well with Brock’s academic mission and strategic priorities. The programs demonstrate strength in interdisciplinary integration, student-centered learning, and community impact, positioning the programs as a leader in the education of professionals who support individuals with disabilities.

Key strengths include:

- A unique and forward-thinking integration of Disability Studies and Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA), creating interdisciplinary training pathways with broad relevance across health, education, and community sectors.
- A positive and collaborative departmental culture, supported by high-quality faculty engaged in impactful scholarship and professional leadership.
- Flexible, accessible program formats that meet the diverse needs of working professionals across Ontario.
- Meaningful experiential learning opportunities and partnerships with community organizations that extend Brock’s reach and reputation.

The review team also identified opportunities to strengthen program equity and sustainability. Specifically, there is a perception that ABA-related initiatives receive disproportionate resources and visibility, which may impact cohesion across specializations. Recommendations for leadership include:

- Supporting strategic planning for both ABA [Applied Behaviour Analysis] and LDCC [Leadership, Diversity, Community & Culture] programs to ensure balanced growth and visibility.

- Promoting equity in resource allocation, instructional quality, and student experience across campuses.
- Investing in faculty development to advance inclusive teaching practices and Universal Design for Learning.
- Supporting the dissemination of this innovative program model as an institutional success story.

The ADS graduate programs embody Brock's commitment to accessible, high-quality, future-oriented education. With continued investment in strategic planning, equity, and faculty support, these programs will remain a cornerstone of Brock's graduate education portfolio and a model for interdisciplinary professional training in disability studies.

B. Program Strengths

The reviewers noted the following strengths:

Throughout the evaluation, we identified several notable strengths across the program offerings. These include:

- **Positive and Supportive Department Climate. Faculty, instructors and administrative staff** consistently reported collegial and collaborative relationships, including opportunities to engage in research together. The overall climate of the department and its connection to the broader university were viewed very positively. We also noted that the collaborations and supports were genuine, as at times we met with faculty in pairs or small groups.
- **Integrated Focus on Disability Studies and Applied Behavior Analysis (ABA):** The combination of these two areas provide students with a multidisciplinary foundation and broadens their professional and academic perspectives. This is an innovative program that can be impactful in creating practitioners, leaders, researchers, and educators in both fields. In general, in the present-day application of behavior analysis, the reviewers find that it is best supported and socially valid when integrated with other disciplines. The current program is a model for that.
- **High-Quality Faculty:** Faculty members are actively engaged in research, with strong records of publication and contributions to their fields, enhancing the academic rigor and reputation of the program. The faculty, despite many being in the early career stage, have established international reputations within their domains of expertise. There were multiple clear examples of faculty engaging students through collaborations resulting in publications, conference presentations, and experiential learning.
- **Robust Student Research Opportunities:** Students are provided with diverse research opportunities during their studies, and many continue to engage in research activities and labs even after graduation. On-campus students join "labs" with a mentoring model that clearly helps to foster a professional and collaborative environment.
- **Practitioner Involvement in Instruction:** The inclusion of practicing professionals as instructors enriches the learning experience with real-world examples and applied insights. There are clear and numerous opportunities for students to engage with faculty on ethics, professional issues, and clinical best practices.

- **Opportunities to engage with faculty while gaining practical experience.** Practicum experience is supervised weekly in relatively small groups (e.g., 17), so that students have access to faculty expertise but also so that faculty can stay aware of student field activities.
- **Program Flexibility:** The program offers multiple entry and completion options (part-time, full-time, thesis, and non-thesis), along with intensive weekend lectures in various locations throughout Ontario. This flexibility supports students who are working full-time and living in different geographic areas.
- **Innovative Practices:** The program has responded to potential concerns related to fieldwork experiences by supporting the professional development of supervisors (e.g., offering a learning community, continued education activities) and by developing a clinical service within the university to support fieldwork experiences and offer additional services to the community.

C. Opportunities for Improvement and Enhancement

Recommendation #1: Curricular Integration & Representation. Ensure that the courses required by both ABA and LDCC students are inclusive to students from both programs and have application within both fields.

Supporting/clarifying text: A strength of this program is the overlapping experiences of ABA and LDCC students. Learning together can help both groups within their professions as they are learning how each other can impact and improve the lives of individuals with intellectual and developmental disability. It is important for their combined courses to celebrate both disciplines to avoid inadvertent messages that one program is prioritized over the other program. To help achieve this, we recommend (1) Faculty collaboration on course design. Encourage the co-development or guest lectures across faculty from ABA and LDCC to ensure mutual representation in required coursework. (2). Cross-program case studies and readings. Ensure syllabi reflect contributions from both disciplines and that assignments require students to apply concepts from both lenses. (3). Offer optional cross-disciplinary projects or symposia where students explore intersections between ABA and LDCC. (4) Consider utilizing the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation to provide feedback on course syllabi/learning objects in the promotion of content from both fields. (5) Consider offering more professional development opportunities in LDCC content so there is similar representation between the two programs.

The Department responded:

Our MA Proseminar course serves as a learning mechanism for sharing knowledge and learning about and exploring the unique disciplines. In the 2024-25 academic year, this course was enhanced by creating syllabi, learning objectives, and assigning a faculty member to teach on load. These enhancements resulted in a different experience for students in the current academic year. In fact, the only ABA-specific presentations included were a few alumni presentations on their work and the ABA student presentations of their research topics. Most of the presentations were focused more on examples of research methods on topics related to disability (e.g. qualitative, quantitative, mixed methods). The students chose topics for the student run symposia, which included guest speakers on graduate student resilience, adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities in the criminal justice system, and research ethics from the perspectives of those with lived experiences from marginalized communities. The survey reflected students who did not benefit from these enhancements, and it is not clear if students in this class were part of the interviews.

We will continue to offer shared courses (e.g., ADST 5P00, ADST 5P50, ADST 5P10) where students from both disciplines can learn together and from one another. As described in our cyclical review submission, experiential components are required for students across both specializations: practica for ABA students and internships for LDCC students. Notably, we have had some LDCC students with internship placements at ABA

organizations, which is another way in which we foster cross- specialization engagement. We will continue to encourage these types of experiences as they align with student interests.

At an upcoming department meeting, we plan to discuss the possibility of combining our capstone course presentation days with a combined LDCC and ABA graduating students conference, which would provide an additional opportunity to bring students from both specializations together.

We appreciate the suggestion to encourage faculty collaboration on course design. In our ABA and LDCC committee meetings, we regularly review course syllabi. At upcoming syllabus review meetings, we can incorporate the goal of reviewing syllabi with the perspective of cross-specialization learning opportunities. Relatedly, we appreciate the suggestion to incorporate cross-specialization case studies and readings in our syllabi and will open a discussion about this and its relevance on a course- by-course basis. We also will review the applicability and benefits of cross-specialization guest lectures.

Regarding the suggestion to offer optional cross-disciplinary projects or symposia for students to explore the intersections between ABA and LDCC, there may be opportunities to do this in a Directed Studies course at the graduate or undergraduate level. Panel or symposium opportunities that bring together people with different types of expertise (lived or professional or both) could also provide an avenue to foster greater interdisciplinarity.

Thank you for suggesting that we offer professional development opportunities to LDCC students that may parallel existing professional development opportunities for ABA students. We look forward to discussing this recommendation at an upcoming LDCC committee meeting and sharing our recommendations on how to implement them at an upcoming department meeting.

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee responded:

This recommendation relates to the overlapping experience of ABA and LDCC students, and the potential sense of imbalance between those programs. This recommendation provides important suggestions for ADS to consider as the LDCC stream grows. This recommendation is a pedagogical issue for the program to consider.

The Dean of Social Sciences responded:

The reviewers have provided a clearly actionable recommendation about fostering greater cross-over between LDCC and ABA students in shared courses. The Department's plan to response is reasonable and thorough, providing multiple avenues to address each specializations needs while fosters more cross-over experiences. I expect that the implementation timeline for this recommendation to be mid-term.

The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs responded:

FGSPA supports this recommendation and appreciates the program's thoughtful response. There appear to be many opportunities to support greater integration across the MA specializations. I anticipate the implementation timeline to be medium-term.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee expects that the Department will move forward as appropriate to enhance curricular integration and representation.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department/Dean
Responsible for implementation:	Department/Dean
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2025-26.

Recommendation #2: Strategic Planning. Develop and disseminate strategic plans for ABA and LDCC programs.

Supporting/clarifying text: The review team would like the program to (1) Dedicate time to developing a 5-year strategic planning for the growth of ABA and LDCC programs (e.g., expansion of undergraduate program, hiring faculty, additional services in the community). (2) Use data from this review process (e.g., this report, self-study, student feedback) to identify strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats within each program to help develop the strategic plan. (3) After developing the plan, host sessions with students, faculty, adjunct faculty, and instructors, reviewing the process, program developments, and rationales for immediate and future investments. (4) Host sessions at regular intervals (e.g., annually) to report progress and any changes to the strategic plan.

The Department responded:

As part of our upcoming department retreat on June 19, 2025, our agenda includes a strategic planning session, including the growth of our ABA and LDCC specializations. We appreciate the suggestion to use the available data from the self-study to guide our strategic planning session.

Thank you for suggesting that we obtain input from students, faculty members, part-time instructors, adjunct faculty members, and other relevant groups on the initial plan. This would guide how we proceed with program development that aligns with our internal needs and the needs of other groups invested in our success and the broader community.

Perhaps the ADS strategic plan could be reviewed annually at the ADS department retreat, which is attended by core and adjunct faculty members as well as our administrative support staff. At each point of review, we can determine the most appropriate way to share our progress and report on changes.

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee responded:

This recommendation requests ADS engage in substantial review of and reflection upon this report and deploy that analysis in the development of a 5-year strategic plan. While a substantial ask, it is a reasonable recommendation and SGSC sees value in this path. This is a planning issue for the department to consider.

The Dean of Social Sciences responded:

Strategic planning is an essential component in program development and growth. The rapid expansion of programs within the Department of Applied Disabilities Studies may have left less room for strategic planning than is optimal. The Department has a clear plan to engage in strategic planning and embed it in their retreat on an annual basis which would be accomplished within a short-term timeline. Additionally, the university-wide shift to multi-year planning and the development of the FOSS strategic plan will assist in embedding strategic planning more systematically within the department within a long-term timeline. Supports provided through the Dean's office in conjunction with multi-year planning will assist the department in its effective integration of strategic planning as well as strategic alignment within the Faculty and the broader university.

The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs responded:

This is a reasonable recommendation, and it appears the program is already prepared to engage in strategic planning for the ABA and LDCC programs. The planning should be implemented within the first year, and then ongoing monitoring will be key to evaluating progress.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee expects that the Department will move forward, as appropriate, to develop and disseminate strategic plans.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department/Dean
Responsible for implementation:	Department/Dean
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2025-26.

Recommendation #3: Be transparent internally with resource allocation as decisions are made.

Supporting/clarifying text: The review team would like the program to continue to work with department and university leadership to ensure that all faculty and students have adequate resources and space (e.g., office, clinic space, lab space) to be successful. As decisions are made consider the following ways of being transparent in how decisions are made. Clarify the basis for new resources. When one program receives more funding (e.g., due to external grants or accreditation needs), explain this openly and share plans for future investments in other programs. Be mindful so that students/faculty from one program are not consistently getting fewer resources (e.g., forgoing lab space, sharing spaces). The responses from the student survey that was submitted in Volume III include statements that suggest that ABA students/faculty needs are prioritized.

The Department responded:

The impression by students that ABA students and faculty needs are prioritized in the budget is unfortunate, and we will endeavour to provide more information to students and faculty to correct this impression. The differences in space allocation are not related to specializations. Faculty research spaces are negotiated between faculty members and the Dean on hiring, with lab spaces historically assigned to tenure track faculty on hiring. At present there are 8 faculty members without assigned lab space. Of core faculty members who typically supervise LDCC research students in addition to ABA Students, two have lab space (Condillac & Burnham Riosa) and five are waiting for lab space (Mullins, Hbranchuk, Luke, Whittingham, Cauchi). Note that these faculty members were amongst the most recent to be appointed to tenure track positions. There are three current faculty members (Koudys, Jessel, Cox) who typically supervise ABA students also waiting on lab space. There is a shortage of office space in ADS. Of the 13 current faculty members, nine have assigned individual offices, two are assigned to a shared office, one is sharing an office of a faculty on leave, and one is borrowing office space when they are on campus. In addition to the above-mentioned space needs, we will need one additional lab space and two additional offices to accommodate two new hires who are expected to start on July 1, 2025.

The ADS Chair and the Deans (I. Makus, who is currently on sabbatical, and Acting Dean, D. Zinga) have been meeting regularly to discuss ADS space needs, particularly concerning faculty member office and lab spaces. ADS faculty members have been regularly updated on these meetings through monthly Chair reports and individual emails to affected faculty members. Recent discussions regarding space have been considering the

two additional faculty members who are expected to join the department on July 1, 2025. Dr. Zinga is scheduled to participate in the June ADS department meeting to further discuss office and lab space, taking into account the needs and available resources at the University.

Furthermore, the department is actively developing plans to operate the ADS clinic, which will serve the local community and provide a training setting for current and future ABA and LDCC students. The clinic will also offer dedicated bookable space for faculty members engaged in community-facing research. Additionally, we will have bookable space for community-facing research and a hoteling office space for faculty members teaching at the Burlington campus.

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee responded:

This recommendation relates to student and faculty concerns about resource allocation. This is a resource issue and outside of SGSC’s purview, but SGSC wholeheartedly supports transparency in this concern. This is a resource issue and some of these decisions will be largely outside the program’s control.

The Dean of Social Sciences responded:

Transparency and engaged decision-making are key elements to cohesive departments. The Faculty of Social Sciences has a transparent approach to resource allocation that is being implemented across units. This will serve as a model for the department as it addresses this recommendation. I recently attended the department meeting to discuss office space and research space allocations. In particular, our discussion focused on effective use and sharing of research space including how to develop the large space footprint of the clinic to include bookable research space. The department is actively discussing how to make resource decisions which will lead to some changes in the short-term and more sustained change along a mid-term timeline.

The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs responded:

This recommendation falls outside of FGSPA’s purview.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted. Although resources are outside of the purview of the Committee, ARC believes that the Department in consultation with the Dean is best positioned to determine appropriate strategies to ensure more transparency around resource allocations.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department/Dean
Responsible for implementation:	Department/Dean
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2025-26.

Recommendation #4: Continue to foster student/faculty cohesion and recognition by creating opportunities for collaboration.

Supporting/clarifying text: One benefit of having an interdisciplinary program like yours is that graduate students are engaged in interdisciplinary collaboration and learn how others are choosing to impact the field of disability. Fostering collaboration (e.g., research, class projects) and cohesion among students as they go through the program may lay a foundation for them to work together after graduation to advocate and change policies/services for individuals with disabilities. A cross-program mentorship group (e.g., monthly/quarterly meetings for professional learning, well-being activities, discussion/dissemination of current activities, professional advisement) may further help to build relationships among students and faculty from each program. Consider expanding the LDCC conference day that showcases graduating LDCC students to include graduating ABA students, perhaps making it a Disability Studies conference bringing together all students.

The Department responded:

We appreciate the suggestion to implement a cross-specialization mentorship group. As described in our self-study, our Student Engagement and Wellness (SEW) committee is a student-driven and faculty-supported initiative designed to promote student wellness and participation as students progress through their respective programs. Following the submission of our responses, we could share this feedback with current student leads/champions and obtain suggestions on how students might wish to mobilize the recommendation. Events co-facilitated by students in both specializations in the past have had mixed response rates across both specializations. We increased the number of these events after our last cyclical review; however, uptake has been consistently variable. The reviewers' suggestion to expand the LDCC Conference Day and integrate both specializations in a celebratory ADS Graduating Students Day is a topic that has been discussed by faculty members over the last several years. In fact, the topic of a combined LDCC and ABA graduating students' day is on our upcoming June ADS meeting agenda, which will be co-facilitated by faculty members teaching across both specializations. Several faculty members are scheduled to meet at the end of May 2025 to develop ideas on integrating the currently separate days, which they will then share with the full department at our upcoming department meeting in June 2025.

In the future, we may also consider enhancing cross-specialization collaboration by exploring how the ADS clinic can offer students interesting and innovative experiential learning opportunities that foster interdisciplinary learning.

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee responded:

This recommendation contains several good suggestions on how ADS can build on this existing strength of their program SGSC supports this insofar as it aligns with institutional goals and the FHB. This is a research issue for the program to consider.

The Dean of Social Sciences responded:

In my experience interdisciplinarity grows overtime. The Department has some clear initiatives that will help support interdisciplinarity among students and an openness to this recommendation. I would like to see some more focus on faculty collaboration as those types of collaborations often create more change among students by opening up new collaborative possibilities and leading by example. I expect to see some positive actions on this recommendation in the short-term with the majority of the growth being a long-term project requiring regular attention and energy.

The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs responded:

This recommendation builds on Recommendation 1. The idea is to create opportunities for students to collaborate so they can better advocate for policies and services for individuals with disabilities. This recommendation will likely be short-to-medium term (1-3 years) for implementation.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee expects that the Department will determine appropriate strategies to foster cohesion and cross-specializations collaboration, noting that this recommendation is closely related to that of number 1.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department/Dean
Responsible for implementation:	Department/Dean
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2025-26.

Recommendation #5: Ensure representation in departmental decision-making activities (e.g., hiring committees) and departmental events (e.g., invited speakers) from faculty/instructors and students from all programs.

Supporting/clarifying text: Comments within the student surveys and interviews indicated that invited speakers are primarily working in the field of Applied Behavior Analysis. Although content from these talks were still applicable to the LDCC students, we recommend ensuring some invited talks each year are from individuals whose work and research would be closely aligned with the LDCC students.

The Department responded:

Thank you for highlighting the feedback from student surveys and interviews, which indicated that invited speakers are primarily working in the field of ABA. This is true of our April Community Training Event, which is an annual event aimed at providing Continuing Education for Behaviour Analysts. We have hosted a few different invited Speakers through SEW and departmental events focused more on Disability Studies but have not mirrored that large event. We have plans and will continue to work toward balancing the invited speakers to align both fields throughout each academic year in the following ways:

-We will balance the invited speakers' announcements to ensure that all students are aware of the different learning opportunities from experts across both disciplines and encourage attendance from students irrespective of their specialization.

-When we invite speakers, we will pay special consideration to how the topic could be of interest to students from both specializations. For example, faculty members are currently in discussion about inviting a colleague who conducts research using Human Computer interfaces to support people with varying disabilities to give a colloquium talk this coming Fall 2025. This topic would be of interest to students across both disciplines.

-At an upcoming LDCC program meeting, members will discuss opportunities to invite professionals whose work and research are closely aligned with LDCC and develop a plan for incorporating these talks into the year (e.g., MA proseminar, colloquia).

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee responded:

This recommendation relates to concerns expressed in the review process about perceived equity issues between the ABA and LDCC streams of these programs. SGSC supports the recommendation to invite more speakers whose work aligns closely with the LDCC students’ interests. This is a departmental culture issue for the program to consider.

The Dean of Social Sciences responded:

In terms of decision-making activities, the Department has been undergoing some changes related to their growth, such as the separation of the Chair and GPD into two distinct roles instead of the previous position that integrated both roles. They are also undergoing an examination of their committee and subcommittee structures. The Department has a clear plan for the implementation of this objective and I would expect them to complete some changes in the short-term with other changes occurring across more of a mid-term timeline.

The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs responded:

The program’s response is reasonable, and I anticipate the implementation timeline to be short-term and ongoing.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee expects that the Department will determine appropriate strategies to ensure representation from all programs.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department/Dean
Responsible for implementation:	Department/Dean
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2025-26.

Recommendation #6: The department should continue to support faculty and leadership development and consider requiring faculty and instructors to take targeted professional development through the Centre of Pedagogical Innovation to ensure their courses are accessible and utilize principles of universal design for learning.

Supporting/clarifying text: Some faculty have utilized Brock’s Centre of Pedagogical Innovation (CPI) to improve their instructional methods. Students reported in their survey that was included in Volume III of the Self-Study that some of their coursework and required technology were inaccessible and didn’t follow principles in universal design. We recommend working with faculty to offer professional development on equity when teaching in interdisciplinary programs, including how perceptions of value and importance are shaped. Additionally, consider identifying and requiring specific professional development offered through the Centre and/or other entities for the promotion of accessible teaching and learning (e.g., universal design) so that faculty are prepared to provide an environment that better meets the needs of all students.

The Department responded:

Thank you for this recommendation. We agree that increased use of UDL principles in ADS courses would be of benefit to our students with and without identified accommodation needs. To implement this recommendation, we plan to invite CPI staff to provide UDL workshops at upcoming ADS department meetings and/or Program Committee meetings where available resources and supports are highlighted. These sessions

would highlight valuable teaching information for new faculty members and perhaps serve as a refresher for faculty members who are already familiar with or use available CPI resources. CPI staff are also part of Brock's new faculty orientation day, which serves as an initial point of contact for new faculty members as to the teaching resources and supports available to them.

Part-time instructors also receive information about CPI workshops directly and some have completed CPI UDL workshops as well. We could explore the possibility of organizing a CPI-led workshop on UDL part-time ADS instructors, encourage them to sign up for CPI workshops on the topic or perhaps remind part-time instructors of available asynchronous learning materials created or recommended by CPI. For courses with multiple sections and a designated Course Champion, we could consider sharing UDL resources and providing opportunities for feedback on syllabi, modes and methods of assessment, and course structure as a way to promote accessible teaching and learning.

Finally, in our department, faculty members rotate in the role of Library Liaison, where they share highlights and updates on library services that could benefit the department. We may also consider expanding this role to include CPI liaison responsibilities. The faculty member serving in this position could highlight CPI workshops and training opportunities to the department, including part-time instructors.

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee responded:

This recommendation responds to student concerns that some coursework and course technology did not follow principles in Universal Design for Learning. This is a pedagogical recommendation and therefore outside the purview of SGSC, though SGSC notes potential collisions with the FHB and the BUFA CA. This remains under the program's purview as a pedagogical issue.

The Dean of Social Sciences responded:

This recommendation points to the importance of continued professional development to enhance the design and experience of learning contexts. In the short-term, the Department has concrete plans to engage with CPI and associated resources. To ensure more sustained change and continued engagement with this recommendation, a clear plan along a longer-term timeline is necessary.

The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs responded:

This is a reasonable recommendation and the program's response to engage more with CPI and create opportunities to learn more about UDL appropriately addresses this recommendation. I anticipate the implementation timeline to be short-term (for engaging) and mid-term to long-term to support individual course development to support accessibility and UDL.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted. The Committee encourages the Department to work with the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation to determine appropriate strategies to move forward on this issue while recognizing Collective Agreements.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department/Dean
Responsible for implementation:	Department/Dean
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2025-26.

Recommendation #7: Faculty should revisit the learning objectives of quantitative statistics for students completing a thesis.

Supporting/clarifying text: Students described different experiences when taking the quantitative statistics course, with some being required to learn how to use SPSS to answer research questions and others understanding the history of the development of statistics. Students also expressed concern in not having the necessary prerequisites to use SPSS prior to the course, making the course more challenging. We recommend re-evaluating the learning objectives of the course and ensuring that students have the necessary pre-requisites to be successful. If the learning objective for both ABA and LDCC program students is to build fluency and understanding of quantitative statistics, and using SPSS to conduct computations, we recommend offering an introduction to SPSS so that all students have the prerequisite skills to utilize SPSS in the course. This could be offered in pro-seminar prior to the students needing to take the course. Additionally, if this is the goal for students from both programs, the course should include examples/problems within both fields of study so that both students are learning the application to both fields.

The Department responded:

Thank you for highlighting this feedback and for your recommendations. While the department has had some preliminary discussions in the past about the statistics course, we agree that it is important to review the course learning objectives and clarify its function within the MA program. If the course is deemed necessary, members of the department should identify the prerequisite skills that would facilitate student success to ensure that future students are adequately prepared (or at least have access to resources) to meet the course requirements. Of note is that students who do not have the required statistics background are given a pre-registration condition, requiring them to complete our ADS statistics tutorial before they can register in their first-year courses. We could enhance that tutorial to provide additional SPSS skills or consider requiring a post-registration condition that a pre-requisite undergraduate statistics course to be taken prior to ADST 5P10.

Our core ADS faculty member, who regularly teaches the course, provides examples and problems spanning both areas of study. However, she mentioned that, previously, she included more ABA examples, as she featured examples from some of her own published and in-progress research. At the same time, students are regularly asked to share their research experiences, allowing for varied examples to be incorporated into class activities. That said, the instructor has made significant attempts to increase the examples and data sets for projects to focus on more generic issues. These recent changes may not be reflected in the feedback provided if students from the current year course were not part of the interviews, as they would not have been in the program at the time of the surveys.

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee responded:

This is a pedagogical recommendation and is outside the purview of SGSC, though SGSC supports in principle a standardized approach to teaching quantitative analyses for graduate students completing theses. This falls under the program's purview.

The Dean of Social Sciences responded:

Methods are an important element of a research program and often require regular revisiting to ensure that students are gaining the requisite skills. The Department has a clear plan to address this recommendation in the short-term and can build a long-term strategy to ensure that this aspect of the program is revisited regularly and potentially supplemented by additional pre-requisites or required workshops specifically on SPSS.

The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs responded:

It appears that the program is currently addressing some the concerns raised by this recommendation. I anticipate the implementation timeline to be short-term.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted. The Committee advises the Department to work with the Centre for Pedagogical Innovation to determine appropriate strategies to revisit the learning objectives of quantitative statistics.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department/Dean
Responsible for implementation:	Department/Dean, with the support of CPI
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2025-26.

Recommendation #8: Faculty and instructors should ensure that all students are receiving and completing adequate prerequisites to utilize the library.

Supporting/clarifying text: Require all new students to Brock to complete the Brightspace tutorial on library resources (perhaps a part of orientation or a pro-seminar), so that they are aware of how to use library resources, including consultation from the librarian.

The Department responded:

We appreciate the reviewers' perspectives and response to the issue raised by surveyed students. The ADS specific Library Tutorial is available for ALL students through our ADS Hangout and is attached to particular courses. This tutorial was spearheaded by faculty members teaching ADST 5P70, which is the first ABA methods course offered in the first term of study for all ABA students. The LDCC program committee noticed this discrepancy in Summer of 2024 while reviewing the DLEs and course learning objectives. Starting in the fall of 2024-2025 academic year, the library tutorial was added as a required component to ADST 5P14 which is the first LDCC methods course. As such the department has already implemented this recommendation. Further, incoming MA students in both specializations and PhD students complete an ADS Advanced library tutorial for thesis development in the library computer lab, facilitated by a librarian and a research librarian. This advanced tutorial is available in a different form to all students in the university and there are multiple opportunities to attend this type of session through regular training offered in the library. We will endeavour to remind students in our course-based programs of these opportunities.

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee responded:

This is a Program Requirement recommendation in one sense, and a pedagogical recommendation in another. SGSC supports making sure that all students are provided resources for using the library. This falls under the program's purview.

The Dean of Social Sciences responded:

Addressing this recommendation will strengthen the programs within the Department and ensure that the students have the required skills to make the best use of library resources. The Department may consider augmenting their plan to address this recommendation with a partnership with the library to build multiple in-class, workshop, and library tutorials into various strategic points within the programs to enhance both knowledge and expertise within library applications and resources as well as fostering a stronger resource culture as a longer-term goal.

The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs responded:

It appears that the program has already implemented this recommendation. Ensuring students are receiving and completing adequate prerequisites to utilize the library should be ongoing and monitored, but no further action is needed.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee encourages the Department to continue its efforts in moving forward on this issue recognizing that it is related to the implementation of recommendation 9.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department/Dean
Responsible for implementation:	Department/Dean
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2025-26.

Recommendation #9: Faculty and instructors should ensure that all students receive syllabi, assignments, grading criteria in a uniform and timely manner.

Supporting/clarifying text: Students raised concerns that syllabi and assignments were not available in a timely manner prior to weekend classes, making it challenging for them to prepare adequately. Additionally, in the survey included in the self-study, 23% of the surveyed students disagreed with the statement that “Grading is generally fair and well explained.” The following steps are recommended (1) Consider having a standard syllabus for all courses taught by adjunct and part-time faculty/instructors to ensure that all students, no matter who the instructor, are accessing the same content and achieving the same learning objectives. This may also help ensure that if there is difficulty filling a position to teach a course, the students still receive the syllabus at the beginning of the semester and are able to prepare for the weekend in-person courses within a reasonable time frame. (2) Be transparent with students when there is a teaching assistant in the course who is completing the grading. Continue to forbid masters-level students from the same cohort grading their peers’ assignments. (3) On each syllabus, remind students of tools available to help them access library resources (e.g., tutorial on Brightspace, Research Guide for Applied Disabilities Studies) and a method for utilizing the consultation resources in the library.

The Department responded:

We appreciate the expressed concern from some students about the timely receipt of course syllabi and assignments, particularly before our intensive weekend-formatted classes, which we understand would make it difficult for students to adequately prepare for class (e.g., complete required pre-class work, readings).

All ADS syllabi for classes that have multiple sections have the same course learning objectives. For ADS courses taught by part-time sessional instructors, we provide the course syllabus. For some courses with instructional teams (i.e., multiple people teaching the same course across different groups or sections of students), core faculty members share teaching resources and meet regularly with part-time instructors teaching the same course to maintain contact and offer mentorship and support, ultimately benefiting student learning.

We have discussed the timely receipt of syllabi and course materials in department meetings in the past and all faculty members have committed to posting course material in advance of their first class. Faculty practices at our last discussion ranged from one month prior to one week prior. Faculty members have also assisted part-time faculty with opening Brightspace sites and sharing materials to assist with this, however, there have been variable results.

A suggestion to potentially mitigate concerns about timely information sharing with students is to increase ADS' faculty complement across both specializations, which would result in less departmental reliance on part-time instructors, especially for graduate courses. This solution could support greater consistency in how courses are delivered across the years and allow for course materials to be shared with students earlier than they might be with part-time instructors.

While instructional style and lecture content development vary by instructor, class topics and the learning objectives of the course remain consistent.

Teaching assistant details are made available on course syllabi. The department will encourage instructors to indicate explicitly in class and on their syllabi that part of teaching assistants' roles is to grade student assignments as a way to support transparency.

In our department, we have continued to communicate to instructors that Teaching Assistants who are peers of or in the same level or cohort of students in a class for whom they are TAing are not permitted to grade those students' assignments.

We appreciate the reminder to include tools to orient students to important library resources. Instructors submit their draft and final syllabi to the department. When it comes time to review syllabi, we will commit to monitoring and providing feedback to instructors regarding adding a statement and links to these student resources.

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee responded:

This recommendation refers to some substantial critique of course delivery and evaluation practices within the ADS graduate programs.

SGSC supports these concerns being addressed in a substantial manner. However, the recommendations to have standardized syllabi for all courses taught by adjunct instructors potentially violates Article 17.02 (Intellectual Property) of the CUPE 4207-1 CA.

All other recommendations for transparency are taken here.

This is a pedagogical issue for the program to consider.

The Dean of Social Sciences responded:

The Department has a clear plan to address this recommendation in the short-term. I would also suggest that in addition to the measure identified the Department put in clear deadlines for review and finalization of all syllabi (full-time faculty and part-time instructors) for each academic term. The Dean's Office is available to support the Department in this initiative by reviewing at a department meeting the importance of providing these finalized materials to students in advance of the first class and orienting both full-time and part-time faculty to University expectations and the Faculty Handbook. Course syllabi are not living documents, nor should they be provided as draft. Syllabi serve as contracts with students around expectations for the course and need to be communicated clearly and in advance in order to support student success. I would suggest a longer-term plan to address any cultural shifts within the Department that may be necessary to address this challenge.

The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs responded:

This is a critical recommendation. The program could request that all instructors minimally post course information at least one week prior to the start of the term. This is especially important if there is an expectation of pre-work prior to the start of the course. It is concerning to have students from the same cohort

TAing for their peers. Perhaps now with the new PhD in ABA and the upcoming Doctorate in ABA, some of these concerns will be alleviated. I anticipate the implementation timeline to be short-term.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee expects that the Department will move forward, utilizing the supports mentioned by the Dean, to ensure that all students receive syllabi, assignments, grading criteria in a uniform and timely manner.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department/Dean
Responsible for implementation:	Department/Dean
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2025-26.

Recommendation #10: Faculty and instructors should consider gathering mid-course feedback from students on their experiences in the course.

Supporting/clarifying text: We applaud the faculty and course instructors for gathering feedback from students at the end of the semester. We recommend that faculty and course instructors also consider gathering feedback from their students during the semester so that students have an anonymous method for voicing strengths of the course and their concerns with the course, and the instructor can consider addressing concerns to improve the experience of the student.

The Department responded:

Many faculty members in the department incorporate formative assessments, such as anonymous "Start-Stop-Continue" activities, to monitor student feedback throughout a course. We will continue to ensure these suggestions are also shared with part-time instructors. Near the end of the Fall 2024 semester, we developed an orientation manual to better support part-time instructors. We could add content on formative anonymous evaluations to this handbook, along with links to suggested activities and variations on format and delivery.

We can discuss, as a department, the interest of members in inviting CPI staff to facilitate a workshop on informal and formative evaluation methods to stimulate new ideas. Alternatively, if these types of workshops are offered by CPI to the broader Brock community, these and related opportunities are flagged for department members.

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee responded:

This recommendation relates to Recommendation #9 in that it encourages instructors to deliberately seek feedback on student experience. This is a pedagogical issue for the program to consider.

The Dean of Social Sciences responded:

The reviewers make an excellent point about effective use of mid-course feedback and the department has a solid plan for encouraging the use of this method among faculty and part-time instructors. I expect that this will be accomplished along a mid-term timeline.

The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs responded:

I appreciate the program’s response to this recommendation, and I anticipate the implementation timeline to be short-term.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted. The Committee believes that the Department is best positioned to determine appropriate strategies to move forward on gathering student feedback during the semester.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department/Dean
Responsible for implementation:	Department/Dean
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2025-26.

Recommendation #11: Consider dissemination of outcomes of this innovative program.

Supporting/clarifying text: To our knowledge, Brock holds the only interdisciplinary ABA and Disability Studies program. This should be celebrated and disseminated for other higher education programs to learn from. To assist with this, we recommend summarizing outcome data for the ABA and LDCC programs (e.g., graduation rates, employment rates, where employed, professional service after graduation, satisfaction surveys). Disseminating how the program came to be and recommendations for beginning a joint ABA-Disabilities Studies program could be beneficial to our professional communities.

The Department responded:

Thank you for the praise. We agree that our program is unique and that our students acquire valuable skills and knowledge regardless of how they apply their skills after graduation. We appreciate the suggestion to summarize and disseminate our outcome data more broadly. We have an active Marketing and Recruitment Committee comprised of faculty members and students who may be tasked with creating engaging dissemination materials to inform prospective students, organizations, and community members about our programs.

This suggestion is timely, as our department is approaching its 20-year anniversary in 2026. We could consider the anniversary and potential celebration as a goal to achieve this recommendation, updating and sharing promotional materials with alumni, community members, and prospective students.

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee responded:

SGSC considers this recommendation to be sound and endorses it. The recommendation recognizes that ADS is unique in offering an interdisciplinary ABA and Disability Studies program, and Brock and ADS should celebrate this fact.

This recommendation for increased publicity to this program falls under program and faculty purview.

The Dean of Social Sciences responded:

The Department has a clear plan to address this recommendation in the short-term with the upcoming anniversary as a great launching point. The Dean’s Office is available to support this initiative by assisting the Department in KMB strategy to highlight the innovative elements and associated strengths of the department along both mid and long-term timelines. The support of our FOSS communications team will be mobilized to assist in developing a multi-phased and diverse strategy.

The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs responded:

I support the program’s response, and I anticipate the implementation timeline to be short-term and then an ongoing activity.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted. The Committee believes that the Department, in consultation with the Dean’s office, is best positioned to determine opportunities to disseminate outcomes.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department/Dean
Responsible for implementation:	Department/Dean
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2025-26.

Recommendation #12: Solicit Community/practitioner input by creating a community advisory board. Consider inviting representatives, clients, and/or practitioners to be a part of this community advisory board.

Supporting/clarifying text: As another avenue for supporting Brock having an in-house clinic and ensuring that the program is meeting the needs of the community, we recommend revisiting creating an advisory board. They should meet twice a year to review program activities, assess liaisons with the community agencies to make certain the program services community needs and the agencies serve the program needs, and promote communication with community agencies and policy agencies. This activity could also be a great learning experience for both masters-level and doctoral-level graduate students as they may be able to help under the supervision of department leadership with organizing, hosting discussions, etc.

The Department responded:

This suggestion is greatly appreciated and is consistent with our pre-COVID initiative, which included recruiting and hosting our first ADS Community Advisory meeting in April 2019. Of course, our priorities shifted when the COVID-19 pandemic hit. Given our current work on moving toward an operational clinic to support some community needs we have identified in the short term with discussions of longer-term clinic expansion plans; we agree that reestablishing the community advisory board will be a critical step in moving forward in a meaningful way with engaging members who are aware of current and pressing community needs.

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee responded:

This recommendation recognizes that ADS offers programs that serve a diverse set of students, professionals and practitioners. The ADS program should take this recommendation into consideration. SGSC notes that this aligns well with Brock’s properties, especially Bringing the World to Brock and Brock to the World.

This falls under program purview.

The Dean of Social Sciences responded:

The Department has expressed openness to re-establishing a community advisory board. I would expect them to develop a clear plan to address this recommendation in the short-term as well as developing a strategy for

continuing the advisory board long-term. I expect that the strategy would be accomplished in the medium-term.

The Vice-Provost and Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs responded:

We support this recommendation and the program’s response. Establishing a community advisory board will likely take some time to implement. I would imagine this being operationalized in the medium-term (1-3 years).

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted for consideration. The Committee believes that the Department, in consultation with the Deans, is best positioned to determine whether to move forward with establishing a community advisory board.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department/Dean
Responsible for implementation:	Department/Dean
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2025-26.

D. Summary of Recommendations:

First Priority:

Recommendations: 1-12