Final Assessment Report

PhD in Interdisciplinary Humanities
(reviewed 2018/19)

A. Summary

1. The program's Self Study was considered and approved by the Academic Review Committee of Senate on November 14, 2018**.**
2. The Review Committee consisted of two external reviewers: Jeff Brison (Queen's University) and Michael Gertler (University of Saskatchewan) and an internal reviewer, Lissa Paul (Brock University).
3. The site visit occurred on March 24-26, 2019.
4. The Reviewers' Report was received on May 2, 2019.
5. The Senate Graduate Studies Committee response was received on May 10, 2019.
6. The Program's response was received on May 27, 2019.
7. The Dean of Humanities response was received on May 30, 2019.
8. The Dean of Graduate Studies response was received on May 31, 2019

This review was conducted under the terms and conditions of the IQAP approved by Senate on May 25, 2016.

The academic program which was examined and rated as part of the review was:

Program(s)	Excellent Quality	Good Quality	Good Quality with Concerns	Non-Viable
PhD in Interdisciplinary Humanities			X *	

* We see much that is excellent in this program, much that is good quality, and nevertheless we have identified some concerns. We struggled to identify the appropriate category in this range of options as we want to make clear that we support both the accomplishments of the program and its potential.

B. Strengths of the Program

The reviewers identified the following strengths of the program:

> The strengths of students and faculty were abundantly clear, even in our brief encounters. All were well aware of the accomplishments and potentials of this interdisciplinary PhD program. Most spoke eloquently about pedagoical [*sic*] principles, and of their deep commitment to developing this novel program. All were involved in scholarship with both local and global impact. One encounter particularly seemed a perfect demonstration of the "strengths and creative attributes of the program." Despite the lack of a specific program, a faculty member,… had encouraged an Indigenous student to enroll, and worked with him to build a program of study flexible enough to incorporate his desire to work in Indigenous culture and ways of knowing. [The student], now at least a couple years into the program, has been working to expand the comps lists to incorporate readings on Indigenous epistemologies. The symbiotic relationship impressed us: the professor invested in mentoring and supporting a student who, in turn, contributed to updating and indigenizing the program.

C. Opportunities for Improvement and Enhancement

Recommendation #1

Reverse the order of the comprehensive examination and thesis proposal requirements, so that the comprehensives come first.

In its response, the Program stated:

> The program committee agrees with this recommendation and will establish a subcommittee to review and revise the sequence of program requirements. This subcommittee will also review the nature of the comprehensive exams, in response to recommendation six.

The Dean of Humanities stated that:

> The Dean supports this recommendation as it will bring HUMA into line with the practices of other doctoral programmes at Brock.

The Dean of Graduate Studies stated that:

> I am very supportive of this recommendation and encourage the program committee to do this as soon as possible.

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee stated that:

> SCGS agrees that the HUMA's Program Committee should consider the comprehensive exams being completed before the thesis proposal, which is consistent with other graduate programs within Brock.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Program
Responsible for resources:	Program
Responsible for implementation:	Program
Timeline:	Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2019/20

Recommendation #2

Expand and promote opportunities for "Regionally-Engaged" and "Research Creation" projects. HUMA should build on an area of existing (but underexploited) strength by encouraging, emphasising, and promoting "Research Creation" (PhD final projects that include both creative and scholarly components) and other alternative PhD final project forms that require students to engage more broadly with audiences both inside and outside the academy. Related to this, we encourage the program to explore expansion of opportunities for students to pursue regionally-engaged and public-facing humanities practices and degree outcomes in HUMA's program.

In its response, the Program stated:

> The program committee agrees with this recommendation and will consider how to expand and promote the range of capstone projects undertaken by its students.

The Dean of Humanities stated:

> The Dean supports the recommendation to consider more opportunities for Research Creation and alternative project forms.

The Dean of Graduate Studies stated:

> I support this recommendation. It also fits with the University's stragegic priority planning goals.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted for consideration. The Committee expects that the program is best-positioned to examine how HUMA degree outcomes might be changed to encourage public-facing humanities practices and the possibility of alternative PhD final project forms.

Implementation Plan (2nd Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Program
Responsible for resources:	Program
Responsible for implementation:	Program
Timeline:	Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2020/21

Recommendation #3

Create more flexible student programs of study by increasing the number of non-HUMA elective courses students can take.

In its response, the Program stated:

> The program committee appreciates the report's support of flexible student programs. This is an issue influenced by many factors, however, all of which must be taken into account and some of which may shift as the program changes other aspects of its structure. It is important to note that with approval of the graduate program director students may already take more than one half-credit non-HUMA elective as part of their program.

The Dean of Humanities stated:

> The Dean agrees with the suggestion to support flexibility for students in the programme. The Reviewers recommend one route to accomplishing that goal (increasing the number of non-HUMA elective courses), and the Dean supports the consideration of this as one of many options available.

The Dean of Graduate Studies stated:

> I encourage the program committee to consider this. In particular, it would be helpful to look at courses offered at other institutions through the Ontario Visiting Student Program option.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted for consideration. The Committee expects that the program is best-positioned to determine the number of non-HUMA elective courses students will be allowed to take.

Implementation Plan (2nd Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Program
Responsible for resources:	Program
Responsible for implementation:	Program
Timeline:	Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2020/21

Recommendation #4

Review, refine and codify the relationship between the supervisory committee and the
Program Committee.

In its response, the Program stated:

The program committee respects the principle of supervisory autonomy and will review
and refine its procedures to ensure that they reflect this principle. The committee also
understands that appropriate procedures for "extreme circumstances" are necessary.

The Dean of Humanities stated:

The Dean supports this recommendation, and acknowledges that the Programme
Committee is reviewing its procedures.

The Dean of Graduate Studies stated:

I strongly support this recommendation. This will bring the HUMA program more
consistent with other doctoral programs on campus and provide equity to students, as
well as encourage efficiency.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Program
Responsible for resources:	Program
Responsible for implementation:	Program
Timeline:	Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2019/20

Recommendation #5

HUMA's Program Committee should work with adjacent/cognate units towards the development of an Interdisciplinary MA in the Humanities.

In its response, the Program stated:

> The program committee supports this recommendation and will establish a subcommittee to investigate its feasibility and potential structure.

The Dean of Humanities stated:

> The Dean supports this recommendation in principle, with the *caveat* that development of programmes is costly in terms of finances, human resources, and faculty energy. The results of the subcommittee's investigations will determine future directions in this regard.

The Dean of Graduate Studies stated:

> This is an interesting recommendation. I would be in favour in principle but further details are needed to be assess this possibility.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted for consideration.

Implementation Plan (2ⁿᵈ Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Program
Responsible for resources:	Program
Responsible for implementation:	Program
Timeline:	Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2020/21

Recommendation #6

The Program Committee should revisit and re-conceptualize the general field exam component of comprehensive exam:

In its response, the Program stated:

The program committee supports and will implement this recommendation.

The Dean of Humanities stated:

The Dean supports this recommendation.

The Dean of Graduate Studies stated:

I strongly support this recommendation.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Program
Responsible for resources:	Program
Responsible for implementation:	Program
Timeline:	Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2019/20

Recommendation #7

We encourage the Program Committee to continue to recruit new faculty participation in teaching core courses, welcoming HUMA students into their existing courses, serving on supervisory committees (as supervisors, co-supervisors or members), and taking part in program leadership. As part of visualizing and actualizing an open and flexible definition of "interdisciplinary humanities," the Program Committee should be constantly seeking opportunities to tap the research and teaching potential of scholars in the Faculty of Humanities, and from relevant fields in the Social Sciences, Education, and the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts.

In its response, the Program stated:

> We will use established and new strategies to increase faculty involvement in the program in all capacities, from teaching to supervision to leadership. We will attempt to recruit faculty not only in the Humanities but across the university.

The Dean of Humanities stated:

> The Dean supports the suggestion to recruit faculty members to participate in the HUMA programme in a variety of ways. This is a key component of continual renewal of the programme.

The Dean of Graduate Studies stated:

> This is beyond the strict purview of the Dean, Faculty of Graduate Studies. However, such actions cannot but add to the breadth of experiences from which students would benefit.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

Implementation Plan (1ˢᵗ Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Program
Responsible for resources:	Program
Responsible for implementation:	Program
Timeline:	Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2019/20

Recommendation #8

Supporting innovative interdisciplinary programs calls for innovations in administration. Despite resource constraints, there are many things that the Faculty of Humanities and other senior administrative units could do to promote the success of (this and other) interdisciplinary graduate programs.

In its response, the Program stated:

The program committee fully agrees with this recommendation. As the flagship graduate program in the Faculty of Humanities, HUMA would welcome further administrative support, particularly in the promotion of the many successes of its student and faculty researchers. These successes should be at the forefront of the Faculty of Humanities marketing strategy, showing that our students and graduates are leaders of tomorrow and agents of change.

The Dean of Humanities stated:

The Dean does not see a clear or actionable recommendation here. While it is suggested that "there are many things the Faculty of Humanities . . .could do", none of these many things is specified. Support is therefore not possible.

The Dean of Graduate Studies stated:

I support this recommendation. Already, we have had discussions with the Dean and Associate Dean, Faculty of Humanities on how to better market programs.

The Senate Graduate Studies Committee stated:

SCGS supports this recommendation for the Faculty of Humanities to continue explore and promote synergistic relations among small graduate programs, as well continuing to explore possibilities for new crosscutting initiatives such as an Interdisciplinary MA in Humanities (or cultural studies).

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be not actionable as stated. However, the Committee recognizes the role of administrative offices in the promotion of programs and encourages the program to consult with them as appropriate.

Implementation Plan
Recommendation not accepted.

D. Summary of Recommendations:

First Priority:
    Recommendations - 1,4,6,7

Second Priority:
    Recommendations - 2,3,5

Not accepted:
    Recommendation - 8