



University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process (UTQAP) Cyclical Review: Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan

Program(s):	Human Geography, B.A., Hons.: Major, Minor Physical and Human Geography, B.A., Hons.: Major City Studies, B.A., Hons.: Major, Major (Co-op)
Division/Unit:	(Review of programs only; offered by UTSC Department of Human Geography)
Commissioning Officer:	Dean and Vice Principal (Academic), UTSC
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	1. Dr. Kenneth Foote, Professor, Department of Geography, University of Colorado at Boulder 2. Dr. Audrey Kobayashi, Professor, Department of Geography, Queen's University
Date of review visit:	October 17–18, 2013
Date reported to AP&P:	April 1, 2014

1 Outcome

The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) concluded that the Decanal response adequately addressed the review recommendations.

2 Significant Program Strengths

- Impressive rethinking of curriculum following departmentalization
- Dedicated faculty committed to keeping programs rigorous and up-to-date
- Unique City Studies program and cutting-edge Geography program
- Positive, supportive environment and excellent morale among students, faculty, and staff

3 Opportunities for Program Improvement and Enhancement

The reviewers recommended that the following be considered:

- Enhancing the student learning experience and students' writing and research skills
- Exploring additional program development opportunities
- Changing the faculty complement composition to continue to meet curricular needs and bring stability to the Department
- Evaluating program staffing levels
- Addressing the need for a common student/faculty space and a computer lab to support emerging areas of research and teaching

4 Implementation Plan

The Dean undertook in consultation with the Department to support the following changes:

- Immediate Term (6 months)
 - Enhancing the student learning experience
 - The Department is considering implementing a range of writing assignments in different classes and a required second-year writing and research design course.
 - The Department will contemplate ways to increase the use of learning technologies and virtualization through its curriculum renewal process.
 - Exploring additional program development opportunities
 - The Department will make curricular changes to both the Geography and City Studies programs that take advantage of, and contribute to, the new GIS program.
 - The Department will launch a summer pilot program on "Scarborough Streets," giving select undergraduates a GIS research opportunity.
 - The Department is planning the next phases of development for the City Studies and Physical and Human Geography programs.
 - Evaluating staffing needs
 - The Social Sciences units have recently hired a financial assistant, reducing the demand on the Business Officer.
 - The Dean is currently exploring the option of hiring a second Business Officer and will engage the Social Science units in a discussion of available resources and future priorities.
- Medium Term (1-2 years)
 - Exploring additional program development opportunities
 - The Department has hired a new faculty member who specializes in GIS, and it will seek leadership from him on ways of integrating GIS into other programs within the Department and across UTSC.
 - Changing the faculty complement
 - The Department will seek to fill positions in key fields that have been identified.
 - Attending to space needs
 - The Department will move into a new Social Sciences building in 2015, allowing for sufficient space for the Cities laboratory and research and teaching needs.

- Longer Term (3-5 years)
 - Changing the faculty complement
 - The Dean will work with the Department to convert recently added contractually limited term appointments to ongoing appointments.
 - The Department will focus on maintaining the balance between the three areas of concentration within Human Geography and City Studies.

The Dean's Office will follow up annually with the unit to assess progress.

5 Executive Summary

The reviewers identified the program's strengths as its rigour and currency; committed faculty; unique City Studies program and cutting-edge Geography program; and excellent morale among students, faculty, and staff. The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: enhancing the student learning experience and students' writing and research skills; exploring additional program development opportunities; changing the faculty complement composition to meet curricular needs; evaluating program staffing levels; and addressing space needs. In response, the Department will continue to work to strengthen the student learning experience through the use of writing assignments and technology. The Department is planning the next phases of its program development, making curricular revisions and expanding experiential education opportunities. The Department will seek to change the faculty complement by filling vacancies in key fields, ensuring a balance across areas of concentration. To address staffing needs, a financial assistant was recently hired to support the Social Sciences units and the option of hiring a second Business Officer is being explored by the Dean. With the move of the Department into a new Social Sciences building in a few years, current space issues will be resolved. The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs concluded that the Decanal response adequately addressed the review recommendations.