



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

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| <b>Programs Reviewed:</b>                 | Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies B.A., Hons. (Specialist, Major, Minor)<br><br>Drama, M.A., Ph.D.  |
| <b>Unit Reviewed:</b>                     | Centre for Drama, Theatre & Performance Studies  |
| <b>Commissioning Officer:</b>             | Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science  |
| <b>Reviewers<br/>(Name, Affiliation):</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Professor Penelope Farfan, School of Creative and Performing Arts, University of Calgary</li> <li>2. Professor Kathy Foley, Theatre Arts, University of California, Santa Cruz</li> <li>3. Professor David Savran, The Graduate Centre, City University of New York</li> </ol> |
| <b>Date of review visit:</b>              | October 5-6, 2017  |
| <b>Date reported to AP&amp;P:</b>         | April 3, 2018  |

Unless otherwise noted, all bulleted comments apply to all programs reviewed.

## 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

- Strong undergraduate and graduate programs that encompass a diverse curriculum
- A dynamic and innovative department
- Strong cohesion among undergraduate students and faculty

Developed by the Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

- High intellectual vibrancy of faculty and students

### **3 Opportunities for Program Enhancement**

The reviewers recommended that the following be considered:

- Addressing design and production student concerns regarding levels of hands on experience
- Clarifying the program's support of performance studies and "practice-as-research" in order to guide decisions regarding the dissertation, the comprehensive exam, and supervision
- Enhancing funding information provided to students on admission
- Clarifying the objectives of the master's program and placing focus on the full-time option
- Identifying options for a communal space for all Departmental activities
- Ensuring consistency of mentorship and support of junior faculty, including opportunities for pre-tenure release of teaching
- Seeking input from the full range of teaching staff during curriculum conversations



# 4 Administrative Response & Implementation Plan

UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO  
FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE

David Cameron, FRSC  
Dean

March 14, 2018

Professor Sioban Nelson  
Vice-Provost Academic Programs  
University of Toronto

## **Re: Review of Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies**

Dear Sioban,

Along with the faculty, staff and students of the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies, I am pleased with the external reviewers' assessment of the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies and its programs: Drama: B.A., Hons. (Specialist, Major, Minor); Master of Arts in Drama (M.A.) and Doctor of Philosophy in Drama (Ph.D.). The reviewers complimented the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies: "The CDTPS has maintained its position as one of the leading centres for the study of theatre and performance studies in North America. With its long history and impressive faculty, the Centre maintains three strong degree programs (BA, MA, and PhD) and remains arguably the leading academic theatre program in Canada."

The quality of this program notwithstanding, as per your letter dated February 22, 2018, the review report raises a number of issues and challenges. I am writing to address the areas of the review report that you identify as key. The response to these items is separated into immediate (six months), medium (one to two years), and longer (three to five years) term action items for Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies, where appropriate. The Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies has discussed the reviewers' comments through consultation with various groups and has begun to implement changes where appropriate and that are consistent with the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies' mission.

### **Undergraduate programs**

*The reviewers noted that students in design and production expressed concern at the level of hands on experience.*

The unit made considerable changes, effective September 2016, in the undergraduate curriculum to balance academic, intellectual, and critical inquiry with practical training in the program. In 2016-17, the Centre was monitoring their impact and in January 2017 decided to introduce changes to the courses specified by the reviewers (production and design). Between January 2017 and June 2017, the unit:

- Assigned DRM254Y to Production in the Production and Design stream with a new module: digital projections
- Assigned DRM354Y to Design in the Production and Design stream
- Introduced a year-long DRM454 combined Production and Design course

These changes have increased the hands-on experience of the students on all levels of production and design education. A number of these changes were introduced shortly before the reviewers' visit in the fall; the unit is now monitoring the success of these changes.

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Additional relevant curriculum changes are outlined in the implementation plan below.

## **Implementation Plan**

### **Immediate-term [six months]:**

The unit's Director and the current production and design faculty are considering content modifications to the production and design courses to respond to the students' changing interests that now include projections, as well as lighting and sound design.

### **Medium-term [1-2 years]:**

Over the next 1-2 years, the unit will continue to monitor the undergraduate curriculum to make sure that the changes introduced in 2016 and modified in 2017 and 2018 in production and design meet the students' interests and expectations of the hands-on experience.

### **Graduate programs**

*The reviewers identified the need for clarity with respect to the program's support of performance studies and "practice-as-research" in order to guide decisions regarding the dissertation, the comprehensive exam, and supervision.*

The unit is engaged in discussions with graduate faculty about the Centre's graduate curriculum. The Academic Committee, composed of the unit's graduate faculty, held meetings in February and March, and has another one scheduled in April 2018 to examine the place and role of Practice-based research in the graduate curriculum. From the discussions so far, it is quite clear that while Practice-based Research and experimental methodologies are encouraged in the Centre's pedagogy in both the MA and PhD programs, the main focus remains on scholarly academic research. The Centre's existing support for Practice-based Research (in which theory informs practice and practice leads to new theoretical questions, and in which the creative work is included in the dissertation) will not define the unit's intellectual profile. This particular methodology is offered only as an option to students with a particular interest in this area. In a long-standing debate about the nature of the Practice-based Research PhD, the Center has maintained uniform doctoral requirements, including the Qualifying Exam and Special Field Exam (in the Centre's practice it is a Prospectus), as well as a standard academic dissertation, whether it includes and illuminates the artifact or not. The Centre will maintain these standard requirements for its PhD candidates. It will, however, reconsider its Qualifying Exams while maintaining the Prospectus as a Special Field Exam.

## **Implementation Plan**

### **Immediate-term [six months]:**

The unit is currently engaged in discussions of "Practice-based Research" (that is "practice embedded in the research process and research questions arising from the process of practice") and "Practice as Research" (that is research that "leads primarily to new understanding about practice") with graduate students. Discussions include the possible consequences of such profiles for graduate education and employability in the North American labour market.

The Qualifying Exam Focus Group that already reworked the Qualifying Exam last year will continue its work and will present its recommendations to the Academic Committee in the fall of 2018.

The unit will also form a Graduate Curriculum Focus Group in the spring of 2018 to consider modifications to the curriculum. This Group will be chaired by the Director, and will include the Associate Director, Graduate, and tri-campus faculty representatives.

**Medium-term [1-2 years]:**

The Graduate Curriculum Focus Group will present its recommendations to the Academic Committee in the fall of 2018. After being reviewed and assessed by the Academic Committee, the recommendations of both groups (Exam and Curriculum) will be communicated to the students and implemented as appropriate, and following appropriate governance procedures, in the fall of 2019.

*The reviewers were concerned over the adequacy of funding information provided to students on admission.*

General information on funding packages for graduate students is now available on the School of Graduate Studies (SGS) website:

<http://www.sgs.utoronto.ca/gradfunding/Pages/DRAMA.aspx>

This site now provides the breakdown for all funding, an explanation of base funding, and other useful financial information for all units and divisions. Students can use this website as a resource to understand their funding. Information on program-specific funding for each student is provided in the original letter of offer and through a second letter sent in the late spring, as well as a funding letter sent by the unit to students in the funded cohort in the late summer/early fall

Additional information is available on the Arts and Science website:

<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/graduate/graduate-funding-facts>

This includes base funding for each graduate unit, including Drama:

<http://www.artsci.utoronto.ca/graduate/graduate-funding-facts/pdfs/fas-base-funding-by-graduate-unit-2017-18-20171126.pdf>

To ensure that graduate students receive clear, comprehensive information about their annual funding, SGS is developing a standardized funding letter template for units to use. This template identifies key information that each unit must provide to students (e.g. funding amount, source and composition, tuition and fees for the funded period, projected schedule of payments, etc.). The Faculty of Arts & Science will require units to provide students with this funding letter by early September of each academic year.

**Implementation Plan**

**Immediate-term [six months]:**

The unit will continue to work to ensure that incoming students have clarity about their packages' components.

*The reviewers recommended that the objectives of the master's program be clarified, and that focus be placed on the full-time option.*

The Centre's MA is a one-year, rigorous, course-based academic program that encourages students to explore traditional, practice-based, and experimental research methodologies in their work. The program is designed to equip students with deeper knowledge of the fields of drama, theatre and performance studies as well as with transferable skills. By developing their innovative thinking, resourcefulness, self-motivation and collaborative modes of work, the program prepares students for independent, boundary-pushing leadership roles, as creators in not-for-profit and for-profit theatres, entertainment companies, museum/archive, schools and colleges, community work, cultural associations. It also prepares students to make use of intersectional opportunities and to engage in performance-based activities in the health sector, environmental sector, and digital industries.

### **Implementation Plan**

#### **Immediate-term [six months]:**

The unit agrees that the part-time MA option has been problematic for students, and is in the process of removing this option.

The unit recognizes that its course offering for MA students needs rethinking in order to meet the objectives described above in a more comprehensive way. The Centre is in the process of forming a Graduate Curriculum Focus Group, which will commence meeting in spring, 2018. Recommendations for the changes to the MA program will be reviewed and assessed by the Academic Committee in the early fall of 2018 and will be implemented following appropriate governance approvals.

#### **Medium-term [1-2 years]:**

The Graduate Curriculum Focus Group will also present other curricular recommendations to the Academic Committee in the early fall of 2018. It will consider the role of Practice as Research/Practice-based Research in the MA program and a rigorous course in PaR/PbR theories and methodology to support such a role.

### **Resources**

*The reviewers appreciated the challenge of amalgamating undergraduate and graduate programs within one Centre, and suggested continuing this work by identifying options for a communal space for all Departmental activities.*

The Centre is split between two main locations, which maintain their historical undergraduate and graduate designations. The Union Building in the University College serves the undergraduate program and the Koffler Centre serves the graduate program. In each, however, the unit has created communal spaces that are used by both groups of students and by the administration to organize the unit's communal events. Such spaces include a theatre lobby in Koffler Centre, and the three rooms shared with the University College in the Union Building (the Walden Room, and the Front and Long Room). Some of the unit's activities require a particular spatial set up and none of the existing spaces is versatile enough to accommodate all of them. Also, the unit's communal events are often associated with events in its theatres and therefore take place in spaces adjacent to them. The solution that makes most sense for the unit in its current spatial configuration is to increase the

existing “traffic” between the two buildings. The Centre has been doing its best to intensify such traffic. In the summer of 2017, the Centre completely renovated some office space in the Union Building for graduate Course Instructors and Teaching Assistants to use and to meet with their undergraduate students. It organizes events targeting a specific program (e.g. Undergraduate Award Ceremony) in the location of the other program. It encourages graduate students to use the common space available in the Union Building; for example, students hold their meetings, organize lectures, and meet as a writing group there). The Centre schedules undergraduate and graduate courses in the reversely designated spaces, and finally, it makes all its theatre and rehearsal spaces available to both groups of students.

## **Implementation Plan**

### **Immediate-term [six months]:**

In order to further intensify such “traffic”, The Centre will encourage its Directors’ Shows and the MainStage production to use other theatre locations, such as Robert Gill Theatre and Luella Massey Studio Theatre (so far all productions have been done in the Helen Gardiner Playhouse). It is also unifying the system of booking the spaces for all the constituencies in the Centre.

### **Longer-term [3-5 years]:**

The unit will continue to work with the Faculty to achieve an optimal space arrangement.

## **Faculty**

*The reviewers’ suggested it would be helpful to ensure consistency of mentorship and support of junior faculty, including the opportunity for pre-tenure release of teaching.*

The Centre has such a support system already in place and working. Junior faculty have faculty mentors working with them consistently throughout their pre-tenure years. Such mentors are assigned right from the start and advise junior faculty frequently. Also, junior faculty have course releases in their pre-tenure year.

Resources for new faculty in Arts and Science include:

- An orientation day for New Faculty
- Mentors are assigned by chairs/directors for all new faculty. Mentors are invited to the A&S new faculty orientation
- All new faculty receive a binder of resources (electronically and in hard copy, if requested). This includes information on: teaching, graduate students, research, career progression, community-building
- All new faculty receive a monthly newsletter. This includes timely information on teaching, research, programming, key timelines, institutional resources, etc.
- The Arts and Science Director, Teaching Support & Faculty Development, is available to meet one-on-one with all new faculty to talk about the resources that are available and to answer any questions, provide wayfinding, etc.
- The Faculty hosts lunches with the Vice Deans and the Dean each year for new faculty (2/year – the Dean attends one)

## **Implementation Plan**

### **Immediate-term [six months]:**

The unit will revisit the existing system of mentorship to ensure that the Centre uses all available resources to optimize its efficiency and helpfulness. The Director will monitor mentorship of junior faculty to ensure consistent support for junior faculty is provided.

*The reviewers recommended identifying opportunities to seek input from the full range of teaching staff during curriculum conversations.*

## **Implementation Plan**

### **Immediate-term [six months]:**

Since the reviewers' site visit in the fall of 2017, the unit has engaged in extensive consultations about the curriculum changes outlined above both with individual sessional instructors about the needs of their specific courses and with the whole undergraduate teaching staff (on January 10). These consultations have provided an opportunity to explain the nature and rationale of the changes that have already been implemented but also to discuss the new modifications. The Centre also held two faculty retreat meetings (December 8 and January 20) to consult both undergraduate and graduate faculty about the future roadmap for the Centre. The unit also holds regular, monthly faculty meetings (we held such meetings on September 6 and 28, November 16, January 10, January 26, February 15, and March 22) that include all undergraduate faculty (tenure-stream, sessional, part-time, and CLTA) and are devoted to curricular and pedagogical issues.

### **Medium-term [1-2 years]:**

The Centre will continue the above practices, including its annual retreats that are now planned at the end of each winter semester. Such retreats will ensure that the unit has accomplished its plans in a given year, and will allow the unit to readjust plans when necessary and to make more detailed plans for the coming fall.

To conclude, we appreciate that the external reviewers identified the Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies' strengths and noted a few areas for development. The Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies has already begun to move forward with plans to address the recommendations as presented by the reviewers.

Sincerely,



David Cameron,  
Dean and Professor of Political Science

cc. Tamara Trojanowska, Director, Centre for Drama, Theatre and Performance Studies  
Poppy Lockwood, Vice-Dean, Academic Planning and Strategic Initiatives

## 5 Executive Summary

The reviewers identified the programs' strengths as the strong undergraduate and graduate programs that encompass a diverse curriculum; dynamic and innovative department; strong cohesion among undergraduate students and faculty; and the high intellectual vibrancy of faculty and students. The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: addressing design and production student concerns regarding levels of hands on experience; clarifying the program's support of performance studies and "practice-as-research" in order to guide decisions regarding the dissertation, the comprehensive exam, and supervision; enhancing funding information provided to students on admission; clarifying the objectives of the master's program and placing focus on the full-time option; identifying options for a communal space for all Departmental activities; ensuring consistency of mentorship and support of junior faculty, including opportunities for pre-tenure release of teaching; and seeking input from the full range of teaching staff during curriculum conversations. The Dean's Administrative Response describes the Faculty, unit and programs' responses to the reviewers' recommendations, including an implementation plan for any changes necessary as a result. The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) concluded that the Decanal response adequately addressed the review recommendations.