



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

<b>Programs Reviewed:</b>	African Studies: Minor (Arts) Classical Studies: Minor (Arts) Food Studies: Minor (Arts) Global Asia Studies, B.A. (Hons.: Specialist, Major, Minor) History, B.A. (Hons.): Specialist, Specialist Co-op, Major, Major Co-op, Minor Women’s and Gender Studies, B.A. (Hons.): Major, Major Co-op, Minor
<b>Unit Reviewed:</b>	Department of Historical and Cultural Studies (HCS), University of Toronto Scarborough (UTSC)
<b>Commissioning Officer:</b>	Vice-Principal Academic and Dean, UTSC
<b>Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Professor Gail Hershatter, Distinguished Professor of History, Department of History, University of California, Santa Cruz</li> <li>2. Professor Shirley J. Yee, Chair, Department of Gender, Women, &amp; Sexuality Studies, University of Washington</li> <li>3. Professor Francine McKenzie, Chair, Department of History, University of Western Ontario</li> </ol>
<b>Date of review visit:</b>	April 4 – 5, 2018
<b>Date reported to AP&amp;P:</b>	November 1, 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

- Enthusiastic and collegial faculty, staff, and students
- Students satisfied with the quality of instruction
- Department leverages the unique location of Scarborough within many programs and courses to explore relationships between the local and global
- Faculty with active research agendas, impressive international reputations and scholarly achievements, and commitment to undergraduate teaching
- Impressive tenure granting rate with system supporting the process

## 3 Opportunities for Program Enhancement

The reviewers recommended that the following be considered:

- Resolving inconsistencies with information and practices surrounding faculty tenure, promotion and leaves, and providing clear guidance and mentoring for faculty members and support for new chairs
- Addressing administrative barriers that prevent faculty from teaching courses across programs, departments and campuses
- Engaging in consultation with cognate units regarding complement planning for Women's and Gender Studies, and History programs
- Increasing faculty-student interactions in response to challenges posed by being a commuter campus
- Continuing to build a cohesive unit and developing formal procedures for departmental committees
- Changing staffing resources and structures to better support the department's needs
- Reviewing and revising the curriculum to improve the coherence of courses and minimize competition across programs, and to scaffold the development of skills and content knowledge in first to fourth year courses
- Addressing the gap between courses listed in the calendar and courses that are regularly available
- Improving the co-op for humanities students or developing other experiential learning opportunities
- Providing additional writing support for undergraduate students



## 4 Administrative Response & Implementation Plan

October 9, 2018

Professor Susan McCahan  
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs  
Office of the Vice-President and Provost  
Simcoe Hall  
University of Toronto

Dear Susan,

**Administrative Response:**  
**External Review of the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies**

Thank you for your letter of August 16, 2018 requesting my administrative response to the external review of the Department of Historical and Cultural Studies (HCS). I appreciate the seriousness with which the reviewers approached the external review process, as well as the thoughtful consideration given to the Department and its undergraduate programs. As the reviewers acknowledge, although HCS is a young Department, its faculty are active researchers with international reputations and considerable scholarly accomplishments, who are also committed to their undergraduate teaching.

The external review report was sent to the Chair of the Department and shared widely among faculty, staff and students. The decanal group, including the Vice-Dean Undergraduate, the Vice-Dean Faculty Affairs and Equity, and Academic Programs Officer met with the Chair and five Program Coordinators on September 4, 2018 to discuss the external review, and the recommendations from the review report; I am pleased with the depth of the discussion that took place. We are considering the recommendations of the reviewers carefully and already have begun to act upon them.

Let me address the specific points raised in the letter:

***Faculty:***

- The reviewers noted inconsistencies with information and practices surrounding faculty tenure, promotion and leaves, and recommended providing clear guidance and mentoring for faculty members and support for new Chairs.

The reviewers have the perception that junior faculty are developing different understandings regarding expectations for promotion and tenure. They believe the recent

stabilization of leadership in the Department will resolve this issue, however, they suggest that some minor improvements in the mentoring and advising of pre-tenure and junior faculty will be beneficial. The reviewers also note that faculty expressed an interest in instituting a set of practices to improve communication and transparency in the Department. Towards that end they recommend that the Dean's Office develop mentoring guidelines and a program for new chairs.

Ensuring that faculty receive consistent, accurate and current date information on policies and procedures that affect them is primarily the responsibility of the Office of the Vice-Provost Faculty and Academic Life (VPFAL) and the Office of the Vice-Dean Faculty Affairs and Equity (VDFAE) at UTSC. These offices collaborate to present workshops for faculty and academic administrators at UTSC that cover the major milestones in their careers, including interim/probationary reviews, tenure/continuing status reviews and promotion. Attendance at these workshops is often low. A new strategy of targeted communication has been established this year, through which the office of the VDFAE will work with Chairs to deliver timely, personalized encouragements to faculty regarding workshops they should attend in a given year. Building an expectation of the value of workshops from the time of hire is one focus of the newly-revamped UTSC New Faculty Orientation (now in its second year, organized by the VDFAE).

New Chairs are invited to attend a yearly Retreat for new Academic Administrators (VPFAL, St. George) and over the past two years, all Chairs are invited to a yearly Retreat for Chairs & Directors (VDFAE, UTSC). Both retreats review policies, procedures and advice for the role. HCS recognizes the importance of effective communication and is pleased to report that there has been very significant improvement in the degree of consultation, communications and transparency regarding the Department's significant decisions and policy making over the past few years. This has resulted in a higher level of participation and engagement of faculty and staff members in departmental meetings, consultations, and activities.

Since faculty often consult with their colleagues on tenure, continuing status, and promotion, we also are finding ways to ensure that faculty mentors are well informed. The UTSC New Faculty Orientation includes a session on effective mentorship relationships in terms of both mentor and mentee responsibilities, and mentors are invited to attend with their new mentees. As another example of a recent initiative, a fund has been established to support departments to hold meetings to review expectations around promotion and tenure. HCS has been encouraged to apply for these funds. Another example is a suite of initiatives related to UTSC's mentorship steering group (*Mentoring Excellence & Diversity at UTSC*, or MEAD). This includes a 'mentorship initiatives' fund to support innovative, grassroots mentorship efforts, a faculty career development fellows program, and the development of mentorship toolkits for both mentors and mentees. The VDFAE is working with Chairs, the Vice-Principal Research, and the Associate Dean Teaching and Learning to strengthen the mentoring provided to faculty for teaching, research and career advancement.

Locally, the Department has done more to communicate discipline-specific expectations to faculty members at different stages of their career, and offers more opportunities for mentorship and advising for both assistant and associate professors.

- The reviewers highlighted administrative barriers that prevent faculty from teaching courses across programs, departments and campuses.

The reviewers applaud the Department's commitment to interdisciplinary education, but they believe that structural barriers – for example, budgetary considerations linked to enrolments and costs associated with TA support – may discourage faculty in other departments from accepting HCS overtures to share their expertise with HCS students. The reviewers recommend that the Dean's Office facilitate the development of interdisciplinary education opportunities – perhaps through memoranda of understanding that specifically address issues such as TA costs, and sharing of credit for enrolments. Such action may be of particular benefit to African Studies, Global Asia Studies, and Food Studies.

HCS has been working hard to strengthen synergies across its programs, and would welcome the introduction of incentives for faculty members to offer courses outside their home departments. HCS is able to consider ways to encourage collaboration among its programs, but interdisciplinary collaboration is more challenging across departments. The VDFAE and Vice Dean Undergraduate are undertaking a pilot in Fall 2018 to reimagine the Minor in African Studies by striking a multi-disciplinary committee of Africanists from across the humanities and social science disciplines at UTSC. If this effort is successful, the model developed can be used in other areas. Finally, the Dean's Office will also look for ways to facilitate the development of interdisciplinary teaching across departments at UTSC.

- The reviewers recommended consultation with cognate units regarding complement planning for Women's and Gender Studies, and History programs.

All tenure stream faculty at UTSC have a graduate appointment in at least one graduate department at the University of Toronto. Cognate units are already involved in hiring via tri-campus agreements for graduate appointments (primarily with the Faculty of Arts & Science); a representative of the Chair of the graduate unit is on every search committee. There are six faculty in HCS who support the Women's and Gender Studies program, four of whom hold a graduate appointment in the Department of History, one in the Department of Linguistics, and one in the Women and Gender Studies Institute administratively housed on the St. George campus. It is also possible for faculty to hold additional cross-appointments. However, the budgetary appointment is held at UTSC, and thus complement planning appropriately remains resident in HCS and the Office of Vice Principal Academic and Dean at UTSC.

### *Administration:*

- The reviewers recommended ways to increase faculty-student interactions in response to challenges posed by UTSC's being a "commuter campus".

The reviewers suggest several ways faculty-student engagement might be encouraged, for example: including students as non-voting consultative members on departmental committees; bringing faculty into contact with students majoring in HCS programs earlier in their course of study; launching lunchtime "meet the professor" gatherings to bring students – particularly first-generation students – and faculty together; and appointing a faculty member to the departmental student association (HCSSA).

The Department is actively promoting faculty-student interaction through its extensive events programming, which includes faculty research talks tailored to students, faculty participation at the awards ceremony for students who have earned the HCS Emerging Scholars certificate, and an annual symposium for students in the Women's and Gender Studies program. In addition, the representatives of the HCS Student Association meet regularly with the Chair and have participated in several departmental meetings in the past last two years. HCS also provides funding for its Student Association's initiatives and has strongly supported its new student-edited journal. The Department agrees with the reviewers' recommendations that more physical space is urgently needed to allow for more student-oriented activities and faculty-student interaction as well as student mentorship, and the Chair has brought these space needs to the attention of the Dean.

- The reviewers noted the Department is still working to build a cohesive unit and recommended developing formal procedures for departmental committees.

The reviewers indicate that faculty raised some concern about the departmental culture as it relates to communication, transparency, inclusion, and trust, and they suggest the Department may benefit from establishing a constitution or bylaws that will ensure all HCS groups are included in decision-making.

HCS is moving to a state of greater stability under the leadership of its new Chair. They have recently engaged in a retreat to discuss curricular reform, and the Department will begin a consultation process in the 2018-19 academic year to identify procedures, steps, and priorities relevant to the development of a departmental constitution and/or bylaws. As a first step the Department will review previous documents produced for this purpose and develop a preliminary understanding of, and agreement for, the process, structure, and major issues/topics that will be important for the development of a constitution.

The Department notes that representation on committees is drawn from its 22 appointed faculty across all disciplines, with the exception of those on leave. Given that most of the programs are small and, with the exception of History, have only one to four faculty members to provide teaching and service, the Department considers it unrealistic and counterproductive to have each program represented on every departmental committee every year; instead, the Department has regularized the practice of having all six program

coordinators on the Curriculum Committee to ensure they have input regarding important decisions on course planning and program requirements. Other important committees, such as the PTR committee, also have wide representations from many programs and different ranks and streams.

- The reviewers indicated that administrative staff are not set up optimally to support the Chair and recommended changes to staffing resources and structures to better support the Department's needs.

The Chair has been working with Human Resources to address departmental staffing needs. Recently, a new staff member was appointed to take on responsibility for course planning, student advising and recruitment, as well as departmental communications. The Department will continue its efforts to streamline workflow and collaboration among its staff members and to improve overall efficiency and results.

The Chair notes that some of the departmental staff, including the Business Officer and Financial Assistant, are shared with other academic units, which can at times lead to work overload and logistical challenges for staff. The Dean is aware of these challenges, particularly as departments continue to grow, both in faculty complement and in student enrolment. The Dean's Office is working with Human Resource Services at UTSC to review the staff complement.

### ***Curriculum:***

- The reviewers recommended reviewing and revising the curriculum to improve the coherence of courses and minimize competition across programs, and to scaffold the development of skills and content knowledge in first to fourth year courses.

The reviewers applaud the Department for their many innovative and interesting courses, and for using teaching resources efficiently and imaginatively; however, they suggest there is work to be done to harmonize the curriculum in relation to skills development from the lower to upper levels, and also in terms of standardizing expectations and learning outcomes for courses at the same level. The specific issues they raise include: clarifying the role of A-level courses, increasing the number of tutorials, and scaffolding the teaching of skills and content across the A- through D-levels. The reviewers recommend the Department, with the support of the Dean's Office, engage in a curriculum retreat to facilitate discussion about the benefits of curriculum mapping.

The Department has taken a multi-pronged approach to address these issues, including pedagogical consultation, resource allocation (e.g., time commitments of staff and faculty, TA/GA budgets, and implications for future complement plans), and working with their Departmental Student Association. A series of surveys were conducted among faculty and students and a number of meetings were held by the Associate Chair and the Curriculum Committee about curriculum reform. In addition, a retreat was held during the Summer 2018 term. The Curriculum Committee will begin drafting proposals in Fall 2018, and in Fall 2019 – after appropriate levels of discussion and fine-tuning – the

Department will begin implementing these proposals. As part of the process, the Department has developed a resource library for faculty that will help faculty and staff better understand the students' perspectives and feedback, and to share course syllabi and pedagogical tips to help develop a more coordinated approach to program requirements and course design. Additionally, the Dean's Office will continue to encourage and support departments' initiatives in curriculum mapping, a process that has the potential to address many of the concerns highlighted above.

- The reviewers indicated that students were dissatisfied with the gap between courses listed in the *Calendar* and courses that are regularly available.

The Department has been actively reviewing its *Calendar* information, and gradually retiring courses, where appropriate. The Department is also making a concerted effort to offer a greater diversity of courses on a regular cycle.

- While there is a lot of student interest in the Co-op programs, the reviewers indicated they may not deliver appropriate placements or related support to humanities students. The reviewers recommended strategies for improving Co-op for humanities students or developing other experiential learning opportunities.

The reviewers report that both students and faculty express concern regarding Co-op in terms of skills development, and in securing worthwhile placements. The reviewers suggest that Co-op strengthen its outreach to the humanities, and they believe Co-op will benefit from receiving clearer guidance from HCS about what kinds of jobs to seek and what training to provide its students.

Experiential education is one of the five key priorities in the campus Academic Plan (2015-20), and UTSC is actively promoting experiential education along three lines: first, program-based including co-op, co-op internships and field placements; second, course-based including service-learning and lab/research intensive courses; and third, co-curricular activities including speaker series.

HCS is currently exploring options other than Co-op to expand their experiential education opportunities. They have been working with the UTSC's Special Advisor to the Dean on Experiential Education as well as the two Coordinators for Integrated Learning Experiences to develop new types of experiential education opportunities both on and off campus. For example, the Department has been reaching out to non-profit organizations to explore opportunities for placements for HCS students and using funding provided by the UTSC Experiential Education Fund to support students interested in these placements. In addition, HCS subsidizes its faculty members' hiring of 5 to 8 work-study assistants thus creating meaningful experiential learning opportunities for its students. Both faculty and students have been very supportive of these initiatives.

**Students:**

- The reviewers noted variations in students' writing skills, and recommended hiring graduate students to provide additional writing support for undergraduate students.

The lack of proficiency in English and academic writing is a serious concern for many faculty members in HCS as this can have a major impact on pedagogical goals and students' ability to achieve program learning outcomes. The Department currently offers a successful B-level critical writing course for students in the History program, and they have formed a Working Group to discuss whether a Department-wide B level course should be offered for all program students.

Regards,



Professor William Gough  
Vice-Principal Academic and Dean

<b>Action</b>	<b>Implementation Timeline</b>	<b>Lead</b>
The Dean's Office will create and deliver personalized encouragements to faculty regarding workshops related to tenure and promotion.	Immediate (6 months)	Vice-Dean Faculty Affairs and Equity and departmental Chairs
Include a session on effective mentorship in the New Faculty Orientation.	Immediate (6 months)	Vice-Dean Faculty Affairs and Equity and department Chairs
HCS will apply for available funds to support departmental meetings related to tenure and promotion.	Immediate (6 months)	Department Chair and/or designate(s)
HCS will communicate discipline specific expectations regarding tenure and promotion to its faculty members, and offer more opportunities for mentorship and advising.	Immediate (6 months)	Department Chair and/or designate(s)
A multi-disciplinary committee of Africanists	Immediate (6 months)	Vice-Dean Faculty Affairs and Equity and Vice-Dean

from across the humanities and social science disciplines at UTSC will be struck to re-imagine the Minor in African Studies.		Undergraduate
HCS will seek advice from UTSC's Special Advisor to the Dean on Experiential Education.	Immediate (6 months)	Department Chair and/or designate(s)
HCS will look at ways to access the Experiential Education fund.	Immediate (6 months)	Department Chair and/or designate(s)
HCS will continue to bring its space concerns to the attention of campus leadership.	Immediate and ongoing (6 months and ongoing)	Department Chair and/or designate(s)
HCS will continue efforts to streamline workflow and collaboration among its staff members.	Immediate and ongoing (6 months and ongoing)	Department Chair and/or designate(s)
The Dean's Office will provide encouragement and support to HCS to participate in a curriculum mapping exercise.	Immediate and ongoing (6 months and ongoing)	Vice-Dean Undergraduate
HCS will begin a consultation process to identify procedures, steps, and priorities relevant to the development of a departmental constitution.	Immediate to Medium (6 months to 1 year)	Department Chair and/or designate(s)
The Dean's Office will look for additional ways to facilitate the development of interdisciplinary teaching.	Immediate to Medium (6 months to 1 year)	Vice-Dean Undergraduate
HCS will form a working group to review the option of creating a Department-wide B-level critical writing course for all program students.	Immediate to Medium (6 months to 1 year)	Department Chair and/or designate(s)

## 5 Executive Summary

The reviewers identified the programs' strengths as the enthusiastic and collegial faculty, staff, and students; students satisfied with the quality of instruction; department that leverages the unique location of Scarborough within many programs and courses to explore relationships between the local and global; faculty with active research agendas, impressive international reputations and scholarly achievements, and commitment to undergraduate teaching; and impressive tenure granting rate with the system supporting the process. The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: resolving inconsistencies with information and practices surrounding faculty tenure, promotion and leaves, and providing clear guidance and mentoring for faculty members and support for new chairs; addressing administrative barriers that prevent faculty from teaching courses across programs, departments and campuses; engaging in consultation with cognate units regarding complement planning for Women's and Gender Studies, and History programs; increasing faculty-student interactions in response to challenges posed by being a commuter campus; continuing to build a cohesive unit and developing formal procedures for departmental committees; changing staffing resources and structures to better support the department's needs; reviewing and revising the curriculum to improve the coherence of courses and minimize competition across programs, and to scaffold the development of skills and content knowledge in first to fourth year courses; addressing the gap between courses listed in the calendar and courses that are regularly available; improving the co-op for humanities students or developing other experiential learning opportunities; and providing additional writing support for undergraduate students. The Dean's Administrative Response describes the Campus, 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