***SUBMITTED TO OUCQA FOR INFORMATION – March 29, 2021***

***APPROVED BY TRENT UNIVERSITY’S SENATE COMMITTEE – January 19, 2021***

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# Final Assessment Report & Implementation Plan

# BA Philosophy

# Completed by the Cyclical Program Review Committee (CPRC)

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| **Degree Programs Being Reviewed** | **Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy** |
| **External Reviewers** | **Dr. Don Dedrick, University of Guelph**  **Dr. Christine Koggel, Carleton University** |
| **Internal Representative** | **Dr. Suzanne Bailey, Department of English Literature and Department of Gender and Women’s Studies** |
| **Year of Review** | **2019-2020** |
| **Date of Site Visit** | **February 13-14, 2020** |
| **Due Date for Implementation Report by the Program** | **October 1, 2021** |
| **Date Prepared by CPRC** | **November 18, 2020** |
| **Date Approved by Provost & VP Academic** | **December 9, 2020** |
| **Signature of Provost & VP Academic** | **Michael Khan, Provost & VP, Academic Signature** |

The Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy has a long history of being a central component of Trent’s liberal arts education. It is a reasoned pursuit of fundamental truths, a quest for understanding and a study of principles of conduct.

Students have the opportunity to study enduring questions, including those about the nature of reality, the limits of knowledge, the validity of ethical and political claims, and the evaluation of works of art. By subjecting fundamental questions to rigorous intellectual investigation, Philosophy students develop exacting analytical and problem-solving skills and refine their capacities for clear expression and critical thinking.

Students are encouraged to development their own philosophic positions by cultivating their abilities to reason logically, to reflect on moral and legal questions, to assess the presuppositions of the sciences, social sciences and humanities, and to develop a world view that does justice to the complexity of life.

**Summary of Process**

During the 2019-2020 academic year, the Bachelor of Arts in Philosophy program underwent a review. Two arm’s-length external reviewers (Dr. Don Dedrick, University of Guelph and Dr. Christine Koggel, Carleton University) and one internal representative (Dr. Suzanne Bailey, Department of English Literature, Trent University) were invited to review the self-study documentation. The site visit took place at the Peterborough campus on February 13th & 14th, 2020.

This Final Assessment Report (FAR), in accordance with Trent University’s Institutional Quality Assurance Policy (IQAP), provides a synthesis of the cyclical review of the graduate degree programs. The report considers four evaluation documents: the Program’s Self-Study, the External Reviewers’ Report, the Program Response, and the Decanal Response.

A summary of the review process is as follows: the academic unit completed a self-study that addressed all components of the evaluation criteria as outlined in Trent’s IQAP. Appendices included: Curriculum Vitae, Course Syllabi, Data Tables, Student and Alumni Surveys and a Library Statement of Support. Qualified external reviewers were invited to conduct a review of the program that involved a review of all relevant documentation (self-study, appendices, IQAP) in advance of the site visit. A two-day site visit took place where reviewers met with senior administration, faculty, students and staff.

Once the external reviewers’ report was received, both the Program and Deans provided responses to the Report. The Cyclical Program Review Committee (CPRC) reviewed and assessed the quality of the degree program based on the four review documents and reported on significant program strengths, opportunities for improvement and enhancement, and the implementation of recommendations.

The Implementation Plan identifies those recommendations selected for implementation and specifies the proposed follow-up and the person(s) responsible for leading the follow-up. Academic units, in consultation with the respective Deans, will submit an Implementation Report in response to the recommendations identified for follow-up. The Report is due October 1, 2021.

**Significant Program Strengths**

* The Reviewers commented on the remarkably successful enrolments in the Philosophy program and courses, stating that it is “surely one of the most successful undergraduate philosophy programs in Ontario” due to the high quality of the program.
* Students develop increasingly important transferable skills contributing to students being well prepared to pursue graduate education in a variety of disciplines.
* The environment and curriculum of the Philosophy program fosters free expression and inquiry, contributing to the diversity in courses such as ‘The Philosophy of Sports and Recreation (PHIL 2020H)’ and ‘Cyberethics (PHIL 3370H)’.

**Opportunities for Program Improvement and Enhancement**

* The nature and extent of the relationship between the Durham and Peterborough Philosophy program be clarified.
* Increase the offerings of upper year courses available at the Durham Campus.
* Students indicated that more information and guidance could be provided for opportunities after graduation.
* Consideration should be given to increasing data collection from students who have graduated.

**Complete List of Recommendations**

**Recommendation 1**

**That the Department of Philosophy be granted adequate secretarial (AAA) support on the Peterborough Campus.**

**Program Response**

The Department agreed with this response and welcome continued discussions with the Dean related to the availability and structure of AAA support.

**Decanal Response**

The Deans agree that additional administrative support may be needed and look forward to discussing administrative needs with the department.

**Recommendation 2**

**That the annual staffing budget for LTAs be available earlier.**

**Program Response**

Program faculty members agree. The Department plans to continue discussions related to the curriculum that will include focus on multi-year planning for each campus. Multi-year planning will continue in concert with the development of course and staffing plans for 2021-22. The Department supports any effort to move the budgeting process, and the approval of staffing resources, earlier in the annual academic cycle.

**Decanal Response**

The Deans looks forward to discussing the potential for multi-year planning and an adjusted budget cycle with the PHIL program.

**Recommendation 3**

**That the Department of Philosophy receive a tenure track position (Durham or Peterborough) or, in the short term, an additional LTA.**

**Program Response**

Program faculty members agree.

**Decanal Response**

The recommendation to increase the permanent (TUFA) faculty complement in PHIL is a resource issue that will be considered as part of the annual staffing plan discussions under the purview of the Dean.

**Recommendation 4**

**That the Department of Philosophy clarify the course progression for the BAH at Durham, making senior level courses available on a regular basis at Durham, or making it clear that senior level students will need to attend the Peterborough campus to obtain choice at the 3000 and 4000 levels.**

**Program Response**

Program faculty members agree. As noted in response to Recommendation 2, the Department hopes to continue our discussions related to the curriculum in the near future. Discussions will include the development of plans for the provision of senior level courses at Durham, as well as the development of better messaging to Durham students as to the benefits of attending the Peterborough campus for greater course choice at the third- and fourth-year levels.

**Decanal Response**

The Dean in Durham is supportive of this direction and looks forward to discussing this with the PHIL program.

**Recommendation 5**

**That Durham assign a Chair of Philosophy to be responsible for core local functions and work in concert with the Peterborough Chair on issues of mutual importance.**

**Program Response**

Program faculty members agree that an on-site coordinator at Durham is desirable as long as faculty in Durham remain connected to the Department of Philosophy.

**Decanal Response**

Other programs that are homed in Peterborough but which offer programming in Durham continue to handle Durham functions, with support from the Dean’s office in Durham. It would be unusual to have a program with a distinct Durham Chair. There is a Durham caucus that guides decision making and supports faculty in Durham.

**Recommendation 6**

**That the Department of Philosophy continue in its development of non-traditional, and in particular, non-Western courses in Philosophy.**

**Program Response**

Program faculty members agree. In the past year, the Department has discussed course development, and has plans to further discuss non-Western and non-traditional course development in upcoming curricular reviews.

**Decanal Response**

The Deans agree with this recommendation and look forward to learning of the program’s progress.

**Recommendation 7**

**That the Department of Philosophy coordinate more closely with the Trent Library in bringing online resources to the attention of students.**

**Program Response**

Program faculty members agree and intend to discuss which particular courses would provide apt opportunities to steer students to the use of online library resources. Some of this work will be necessary as teaching continues ‘online’ and ‘remotely’ due to the pandemic. The Department will aim to develop ways to coordinate more closely with the Trent Library to generate more concrete proposals within the next year.

**Decanal Response**

The Deans agree with this recommendation and look forward to working with the program to coordinate more closely with the library.

**Recommendation 8**

**That the photocopier and the mailboxes be removed from the departmental office (Peterborough).**

**Program Response**

**Program faculty members agree, and the chair will continue to discuss with appropriate staff what options exist for different uses of available spaces.**

**Decanal Response**

Although not a quality issue, the Deans encourage the Department to seek possible options.

**Implementation Plan**

The Implementation Plan provides a summary of the recommendations that require action. The Academic Unit in consultation with their Dean will be responsible for moving forward with the recommendations to ensure that each is completed within the recommended timeframe.

The Academic Unit will submit an Implementation Report to their Dean reporting on the completion and/or status of each recommendation. The Dean will review the Implementation Report prior to submitting the report to the Office of the Provost.

**DUE DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION REPORT: OCTOBER 1, 2021**

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| **Recommendation** | **Proposed Follow-Up**  *If no follow-up is recommended, please clearly indicate ‘No follow up report is required’ and provide rationale.*  *Indicate specific timeline for completion or addressing recommendation if different than Due Date for Implementation Report* | **Position Responsible for Leading Follow-up** |
| Recommendation 1  That the Department of Philosophy be granted adequate secretarial (AAA) support on the Peterborough Campus. | Dean to review secretarial (AAA) workload. | Dean, Peterborough |
| Recommendation 2  That the annual staffing budget for LTAs be available earlier. | Dean will communicate recommendation to senior administration where timing and multi-year scope of staffing plans is determined. | Deans |
| Recommendation 3  That the Department of Philosophy receive a tenure track position (Durham or Peterborough) or, in the short term, an additional LTA. | No follow-up required. A new hire is a resource issue and is part of annual staffing plan discussions under the purview of the Deans. |  |
| Recommendation 4  That the Department of Philosophy clarify the course progression for the BAH at Durham, making senior level courses available on a regular basis at Durham, or making it clear that senior level students will need to attend the Peterborough campus to obtain choice at the 3000 and 4000 levels. | The implementation of this recommendation will require coordination with the Dean and administrators at Trent Durham. | Chair in consultation with Dean & Head of Durham |
| Recommendation 5  That Durham assign a Chair of Philosophy to be responsible for core local functions and work in concert with the Peterborough Chair on issues of mutual importance. | At the current time, there is no plan to change the structure of the Durham campus; however, a plan to increase collaboration and work collectively on issues of mutual importance will be a priority. | Chair, in consultation with both Durham and Peterborough Deans |
| Recommendation 6  That the Department of Philosophy continue in its development of non-traditional, and in particular, non-Western courses in Philosophy. | Department to provide update | Chair |
| Recommendation 7  That the Department of Philosophy coordinate more closely with the Trent Library in bringing online resources to the attention of students. | The Committee looks forward to learning how students will be encouraged to utilize online resources to enhance learning and create opportunities for research. | Chair |
| Recommendation 8  That the photocopier and the mailboxes be removed from the departmental office (Peterborough). | No follow-up required. This recommendation will not directly impact the quality of the degree program. |  |