



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

Program(s) Reviewed:	Urban Studies, Honours B.A.: Specialist, Major, Minor
Division/Unit in Which Program(s) is Housed:	Innis College, Faculty of Arts & Science
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	1. Professor Meg Holden, Department of Urban Studies and Geography, Simon Fraser University 2. Professor Michael Leaf, School of Community and Regional Planning, University of British Columbia
Date of Review Visit:	February 26–27, 2015
Date Reported to AP&P:	March 30, 2016

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

- High demand program that enjoys an excellent reputation and benefits from the student-centred college environment
- Interdisciplinary emphasis and breadth are hallmarks of the program, which draws on a diverse array of courses from at least eight different Arts & Science departments

- Enjoys a complementary relationship with the much larger undergraduate programs in Department of Geography and Planning
- Strong emphasis on experiential learning and community engagement
- Mentorship program connects current students with alumni and others in urban professions throughout Toronto; an effective bridge to jobs for new graduates
- Regularly hosts and convenes numerous high-profile events for students, the University community, and the community at large
- Very good infrastructure and resources to support the program

3 Opportunities for Program Enhancement

- Determining the right number of curricular options within the program
- Engaging with cognate units to ensure students have access to the courses that they need.
- Developing relationships with relevant units outside of Arts & Science, such as Architecture and Engineering, to further enhance the student experience
- Better using course evaluations to assess and enhance the program
- Reconsidering the resources, including faculty, to deliver the program and its high quality experiential learning opportunities
- Evaluating the possible impact of future program growth on the program's personalized approach
- Evaluating models for future directions to build upon current strengths

4 Implementation Plan

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

- Immediate Term (6 months)
 - Engaging with cognate units to ensure students have access to the courses that they need
 - The Program Director will continue to engage with the units who share strong relationships with the program to review the current access of Urban Studies students to courses outside the program and to formalize these arrangements, ensuring Urban Studies students have priority access to courses in cognate units.
 - The Program Director will reach out to other FAS units that may be compatible partners for future arrangements such as the School of Public Policy and Governance and the Department of Political Science.
 - Evaluating models for future directions to build upon current strengths
 - The Dean evaluated the models proposed by the reviewers, and agreed with their recommendation of expanding the program's communications research; increasing coordination of urban-related offerings across campus; and continuing involvement with the City of Toronto.
- Medium Term (1–2 years)
 - Determining the right number of curricular options within the program

- The Program Director will review the course offerings with the aim of choosing courses that will complement a student's learning of urban studies as taught at U of T.
- Developing relationships with relevant units outside of Arts & Science, such as Architecture and Engineering, to further enhance the student experience
 - The Director will consult with the Faculty of Applied Science & Engineering and the Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design to explore opportunities of cross-listed course offerings from faculty whose aims and interests intersect with those of the Urban Studies Program. An excellent overview of the different types of urban-focused research and teaching conducted at the UofT is provided by the Urban Innovation Report, indicating the potential academic partners for the Urban Studies Program.
- Better using course evaluations to assess and enhance the program
 - The Urban Studies Program will continue to refine program-specific questions on course evaluations and work on meaningful strategies to use student responses as one method among many to improve course effectiveness.
- Reconsidering the resources, including faculty, to deliver the program and its high quality experiential learning opportunities
 - The Director will prepare a strategic plan to be presented to the Faculty of Arts and Science (FAS) Dean's Office outlining the resources needed to continue offering the high level of teaching and experiential learning to the Urban Studies students.
- Longer Term (3–5 years)
 - Evaluating the possible impact of future program growth on the program's personalized approach
 - The Director, in consultation with the program's core faculty, will review the status of the program and what resources are needed to maintain the quality of the program.

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 excellent reputation; its situation in the student-centred college environment; its Interdisciplinary emphasis and breadth are hallmarks of the program, which draws on a diverse array of courses from at least eight different Arts & Science departments; its complementary relationship with the much larger undergraduate programs in Department of Geography and Planning; its strong emphasis on experiential learning and community engagement, including its mentorship program; the high-profile events that it offers; and the very good infrastructure and resources to support the program. The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: determining the right number of curricular options within the program; engaging with cognate units to ensure students have access to the courses that they need; developing relationships with relevant units outside of Arts & Science; better using course evaluations to assess and enhance the program; reconsidering the resources, including faculty, to deliver the program and its high quality experiential learning opportunities; evaluating the possible impact of future program growth on

the program's personalized approach; and evaluating models for future directions to build upon current strengths. The Program Director will build on relationships to support the program, and will forge new relationships and seek access to courses in other units. The Program Director will review the course offerings with the aim of choosing courses that will complement a student's learning of urban studies as taught at U of T. The Urban Studies Program will continue to refine program-specific questions on course evaluations and work on meaningful strategies to use student responses as one method among many to improve course effectiveness. The Director will prepare a strategic plan to be presented to the Faculty of Arts and Science (FAS) Dean's Office. The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) concluded that the decanal response adequately addressed the review recommendations.