



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

Program(s):	Religion, B.A., Hons.: Specialist, Major; Minor Christian Origins, B.A., Hons.: Specialist Islamic Studies, B.A., Hons.: Major Buddhist Studies, B.A., Hons: Specialist, Major Study of Religion, M.A., Ph.D.
Division/Unit:	Department for the Study of Religion
Commissioning Officer:	Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science
Reviewers (Name, Affiliation):	Dr. Shahzad Bashir, Lysbeth Warren Anderson Professor, Department of Religious Studies, Stanford University Dr. Ehud Ben Zvi, Professor and former Chair, Religious Studies Program and Department of History & Classics, University of Alberta Dr. Paul Groner, Professor, Department of Religious Studies, University of Virginia
Date of review visit:	October 4-5, 2012
Date reported to AP&P:	April 16, 2013

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

- The undergraduate and graduate programs' innovation, creativity and breadth
- The rich range of courses and fieldwork opportunities available to undergraduate students
- The distinguished faculty with international reputations

- The Department's commitment to teaching

3 Opportunities for Program Improvement and Enhancement

The reviewers recommended that the following be considered:

- Addressing the unavailability or limited availability of language instruction in certain areas, which limits the undergraduate and graduate student study of major religions
- Developing a Specialist option for the undergraduate program in Islamic Studies and adding academic staff and administrative support for this area to meet increased demand
- Pursuing the proposed Master of Religion in the Public Sphere and assessing its long-term financial sustainability and the staff required to support it

4 Implementation Plan

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

- Immediate Term (6 months)
 - Adding student offerings
 - Additional Sanskrit instruction was introduced in 2012, coupled with the offering of introductory Sanskrit in summer terms
 - Developing programs
 - The Department has applied for additional full-time, tenure stream positions in key areas
 - The Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations (NMC) hopes to make a new hire in the area of Arabic Language and Literatures, which could benefit the Department for the Study of Religion's current and proposed programs
 - The Department is currently working with the Vice-Dean, Graduate Education & Program Reviews to study the feasibility of the proposed master's program in Religion in the Public Sphere, assessing if academic, administrative, student programming and financial supports are sufficient for a new program
 - The Department has begun the assessment of its administrative needs in consultation with the Faculty of Arts & Science Office of Human Resources
- Medium Term (1-2 years)
 - Adding student offerings
 - The Department will form an undergraduate student association and will take advantage of new social networking tools strengthen students' skills in oral and visual communication
- Longer Term (3-5 years)
 - Addressing limited language instruction
 - The Department Chair has explored opportunities to fundraise—in particular, in collaboration with the University of Toronto Mississauga (UTM) Department of Historical Studies—to support a full-time teaching-stream position in Sanskrit within the Department, in whole or in part

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

5 Executive Summary

The reviewers identified the programs' strengths as innovation, creativity and breadth; the rich range of courses and fieldwork opportunities available to undergraduate students; and the international reputation and commitment to teaching. The reviewers recommended that the following issues be addressed: the unavailability or limited availability of language instruction in certain areas; the development of a Specialist option for the undergraduate program in Islamic Studies and adding academic staff and administrative support for this area to meet increased demand; and pursuing the proposed Master of Religion in the Public Sphere. The Department has begun to offer additional Sanskrit instruction, and it will work towards collaborative fundraising to support a full-time, teaching-stream position in Sanskrit within the Department. The Department has applied for additional full-time, tenure stream positions in key areas, and the Department of Near and Middle Eastern Civilizations (NMC) hopes to make a new hire in the area of Arabic Language and Literatures, which could benefit the Department for the Study of Religion's current and proposed programs. The Department is currently working with the Vice-Dean, Graduate Education & Program Reviews to study the feasibility of the proposed master's program in Religion in the Public Sphere, assessing if academic, administrative, student programming and financial supports are sufficient for a new program. The Department has begun the assessment of its administrative needs in consultation with the Faculty of Arts & Science Office of Human Resources. The Committee on Academic Policy and Programs (AP&P) concluded that the Decanal response adequately addressed the review recommendations.