



UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO
FACULTY OF ARTS & SCIENCE

December 1, 2023

Professor Susan McCahan
Vice-Provost, Academic Programs
University of Toronto

RE: Interim Monitoring Report on cyclical review of the Department of French

Dear Prof. McCahan,

I write in response to your letter of July 14, 2023 requesting an Interim Monitoring Report on the March 21-22, 2019 UTQAP cyclical review of the Department of French and its undergraduate and graduate programs.

The UTQAP cyclical review process is an invaluable exercise that affords us the opportunity to take stock of our academic units and programs, to recognize achievement, and identify areas for improvement. As you note, under section 6.9.1.4 of the University of Toronto Quality Assurance Process, a brief status report on the implementation of plans outlined in the Dean's administrative response is due midway between the year of the last and next UTQAP review site visits.

I am pleased to send you this status report in the attached Table, where each of the Implementation Plan recommendations have been addressed with updates from the unit and from the Dean's office on progress made to date.

Thank you very much for the opportunity to prepare this Interim Monitoring Report. The reviewers' comments and recommendations continue to help inform the future priorities of the Department of French and its undergraduate and graduate programs.

Sincerely,

Melanie Woodin
Dean, Faculty of Arts & Science
Professor, Department of Cell & Systems Biology

cc.

Anne-Marie Brousseau, Chair, Department of French, Faculty of Arts & Science

Suzanne Wood, Special Advisor to the Dean on Unit-Level Reviews, Faculty of Arts & Science

Gillian Hamilton, Associate Dean, Unit-Level Reviews, Faculty of Arts & Science

David Lock, Coordinator, Academic Planning and Reviews, Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Emma del Junco, Acting Coordinator, Academic Planning and Reviews, Office of the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs

Andrea Benoit, Academic Planning & Review Officer, Office of the Dean, Faculty of Arts and Science

UTQAP Cyclical Review Interim Monitoring Report

As required under [UTQAP section 6.9.1.4](#), the Vice-Provost, Academic Programs (VPAP) will request the Interim Monitoring Report from the Dean midway between the year of the last and next site visits.

Department of French, Faculty of Arts & Science

UTQAP Cyclical Review: March 21-22, 2019

Review Reported to Governance: May 6, 2020

The Department did not request support from the [Program Innovation Funding \(PIF\)](#).

Request Prompt <i>verbatim from the request</i>	Implementation Plan Update
<p><i>The reviewers expressed concern about high school students’ readiness to study French at the undergraduate level, citing that “learning or re-learning French could become a daunting task” and linked this with “challenges related to attrition and retention of students.”</i></p>	<p>To address the first challenge (language training in high school), the department has reviewed various aspects of our language teaching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • launch of new placement test (July 2022) designed to replace the previous, 20-year-old test. This new test will allow the department to place students in courses that best match their level, but it has also been designed to serve as an evaluation tool for courses and programs. The new test will hence be used in the continuous identification, evaluation, and calibration of learning outcomes in all language courses. • creation (2022-23) of two new mandatory courses FSL 224 Practical French for Exploring Linguistics, and FSL 225 Practical French for Exploring Literature focusing on the academic use of language to strengthen students’ language skills in all three Majors. • division of all Y courses into H courses (starting Fall 2022), to allow for greater homogeneity of language skills in class. • reassessment of learning objectives for each level of the language courses and alignment to ensure a clear progression from one level to the next. <p>To address the second challenge (attracting and retaining students), the department has developed the first of two courses (FRE 384 Teaching French as a Second Language being offered in 2023-24) focusing on language teaching, including an experiential learning component (using resources from the Experiential Learning Hub and ELOS). This course is part of the Major in French Language Learning (the most popular major program of study in the department). This program is particularly aimed at students considering a career in education.</p> <p>To attract students contemplating a career as a French teacher (a priority for the department and shared by the external reviewers), the department has started devising a communication strategy tailored to this potential pool of students (website and three social media accounts). A global communication</p>

	strategy is also underway, including a YouTube channel showcasing professors and students (graduate and undergraduate).
<p><i>The reviewers noted large class sizes in undergraduate language courses which, in particular, are too large to allow “homogenous learning, in-class participation, and a relationship with the Instructor.” They recommend bringing class sizes “more in line with what it is done at other institutions in Canada.”</i></p>	<p>At the upper levels (FSL300+), class size has been reduced significantly to facilitate participation and interaction. For example, the mainstream 3rd-year course was previously capped at 70 (within a pyramidal structure); this number has been reduced to 35. At other levels from FSL120+, class sizes have been reduced to 50 at most (including one hour per week of smaller-group tutorials) with ongoing assessment of the viability of further class size reductions, given staffing constraints. All year-long FSL classes have been divided into semester-long classes. This has been enabled by the more fine-grained updated placement test and permits greater homogeneity, as well as flexibility for students. With several years of on-line teaching and learning due to COVID, the department continues to assess the outcomes of these changes and is attentive to the success of these refinements.</p>
<p><i>The reviewers noted the absence of a specialized Canadian/Quebec Literature program offering, and encouraged the department to pursue partnerships with the Centre for Indigenous Studies to create “new opportunities for expansion and concentration on Canadian Studies.”</i></p>	<p>The department would gladly collaborate with the Centre for Indigenous Studies but does not have the resources in this field to do so.</p> <p>The department’s requests for a position in Quebec, Canadian, and Indigenous literature have not been successful.</p> <p>The Department of French completed a five-year unit level plan in 2022-23, which outlined a complement plan (and noted that the complement in literature has changed since the external review, with one retirement and one resignation).</p>
<p><i>The reviewers suggested lowering the M.A. (Linguistics stream) admission requirement to 3.0 FCE in core Linguistics in order to increase the pool of eligible applicants; they also noted a lack of alignment between this relatively high Linguistics</i></p>	<p>The admission requirements have been decreased from 5.0 to 3.0 FCE in core Linguistics (starting Fall 2021).</p>

<p>admission requirement and the program requirement of 1.5 FCE in introductory Linguistics courses in the Linguistics stream M.A. and Ph.D.</p>	
<p>The reviewers expressed concern about time-to-completion rates for Ph.D. students.</p>	<p>Reducing time to completion for Ph.D. students is a top priority for the department. The department has identified a series of strategies to better support doctoral students, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • additional funding from the department (from available budget and advancement initiatives) to reduce the time students devote to teaching and other remunerative activities (since Spring 2023); • enhanced guidance and support in teaching, research, and dissertation writing (starting Fall 2023); • improving mental health supports: this includes helping faculty to better recognize potential mental health problems in graduate students and learn how to direct them to the appropriate services offered by the University (ongoing); • more streamlined program completion requirements (qualifying exams, thesis proposal) which would lead students to start their dissertation writing earlier. • The language requirement (approximately 100 hours) has been eliminated in (starting Fall 2022). Other requirements are being discussed and assessed. • Starting in fall 2023, the department began hosting monthly full-day writing bootcamps for doctoral students, with an eye to increasing frequency as students participate. <p>Current discussions are ongoing about the recommendations of the Doctoral Student Success Advisory Committee, which will lead to the implementation of monitoring and support initiatives in 2024 and 2025.</p>
<p>The Reviewers suggested exploring the blending of expertise from other areas into the program to enrich the experience. For example, exploring the area of digital humanities to “promote trans-disciplinarity ... and further develop computationally engaged research and teaching.”</p>	<p>A new faculty member in computational linguistics joined the department in July 2020 and is a member of the Data Science Institute, the U of T central hub for data science. He is currently supervising a postdoctoral fellow funded by the DSI. This faculty member is also involved in collaborative research with other departments (Computer Science, Linguistics, Spanish & Portuguese).</p> <p>Ideas are currently being shared for a collaborative Minor in Language and Computational Linguistics. The project is in a very preliminary stage.</p>

<p><i>The reviewers raised concerns regarding faculty complement (particularly in Linguistics and Literature) and tri-campus distribution of teaching responsibilities.</i></p>	<p>Since the review, the department has hired two tenure stream colleagues in linguistics: one in computational linguistics (July 2020, discussed above) and one in experimental linguistics (July 2022). The department has also hired a teaching stream faculty member in language and linguistics (July 2023).</p> <p>Teaching responsibilities for the French Graduate Department have been clarified in the Tri-Campus Graduate Unit Memorandum of Agreement (the MOA), which was signed by the chairs of the three budgetary academic units in June 2023. The MOA states: Graduate teaching and supervision are expected of all faculty members with full membership in the School of Graduate Studies. Graduate faculty members are normally assigned 0.5 FCE of graduate teaching every year, depending on the curricular needs of the Department. Graduate faculty members supervise M.A. and PhD students, serve on supervisory committees, and on comprehensive and final exam committees, should they agree.</p> <p>Discussions are underway within the department to decide on the next position request that will be submitted to the Faculty Appointments Committee next February.</p>
<p><i>The reviewers noted communication challenges within the graduate department, both among faculty and between faculty and students, due to the tri-campus nature of the department.</i></p>	<p>Communication challenges outlined in the review report and discussed in the Implementation Plan will be further addressed through implementation of the recent tri-campus Memorandum of Agreement:</p> <p>The MOA states: The participating budgetary academic units agree to work collaboratively to share information with faculty members and students across campuses, and to develop appropriate methods of communication to do so. The communication mechanisms in place for the graduate unit include memos, occasional newsletters, minutes of the General Assemblies, Curriculum Committee and Executive Committee meetings, and regular email contact. Mailing lists are maintained on the St. George campus by the Assistant to the Chair, the Departmental Secretary, and the Graduate Counsellor. Chairs of the budgetary units agree to communicate to the Graduate unit all relevant information.</p> <p>The MOA also states: The Graduate Chair will call two meetings per year (Fall and Spring) of the three participating budgetary academic unit heads. Topics for discussion at these annual meetings may include: the hiring and recruitment of new faculty; support for research in the discipline, including dissemination (e.g., conferences); graduate teaching expectations in budgetary academic unit workload policies (see also 10.2.3); defining reasonable expectations for graduate teaching and supervision; communicating the needs and interests of the graduate unit so that these can be incorporated into decision-making within each budgetary academic unit; regular information sharing and consultation in matters of strategic planning for the graduate program, including best practices around engaging and supporting students; teaching and service duties.</p>
<p><i>The reviewers noted challenges linked to availability of space, particularly common areas where students can “meet with other students and</i></p>	<p>Extensive renovations have been completed during the COVID lockdown. They include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new-build office, reserved for colleagues from other campuses, postdoctoral fellows, and visitors. • The former Chair’s office transformed into a seminar/meeting room, fully equipped with a smart TV, soundbar, camera, and furniture allowing multiple configurations (traditional classroom, small group seating or conference setting). • The second largest similarly equipped, and open to all students for informal gatherings when available.

<p><i>Faculty, share their experiences at the University, practice French and be more integrated in the university and departmental life.”</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Two rooms dedicated to students: one with four workstations (with computers, docking stations, and printer-scanner) and one with one workstation and a meeting table. • Offices shared by graduate students cleaned, decluttered, and equipped with new furniture. <p>The linguistics lab project in Carr Hall is in the design phase and the Dean’s office is working with the Chair, in conjunction with St. Michael’s College, on this plan. The lab will be open, starting Spring 2024, to all faculty doing experimental linguistics research in A&S language departments.</p>
<p>Other recommendations or implementation plans not prioritized in the Request for Administrative Response</p>	<p>N/A</p>
<p>Findings of assessments of program effectiveness, conducted as outlined in the self-study (<i>see section 3.4 of the self-study template for more information</i>)</p>	<p>The department has structures in place (as required in the By-Laws) for the ongoing assessment of courses and programs with regards to the attainment of learning objectives. The Curriculum Committee (which meets monthly) oversees all undergraduate and graduate programs. The Language Committee (which also meets monthly) oversees all questions related to language teaching: undergraduate courses and programs, placement test, teaching methods, and learning material.</p>
<p>The status of any additional items discussed at the AP&P meeting as captured in the FAR/IP</p>	<p>No follow-up report was requested.</p>
<p>Consultation in developing this brief report and (where applicable) a statement of how the Faculty has monitored the implementation of review recommendations</p>	<p>The Dean’s office consulted with the Chair of the Department of French on progress made on the Implementation Plan through ongoing meetings with the Chair, as well as the department’s five-year unit level plan and the Dean’s response to the plan, which facilitates regular and ongoing communication between the department and the Dean’s office.</p>