

# Final Assessment Report

## Master of Catholic Thought (MCT)

### March 2022

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#### **Executive Summary**

External reviewers found that the Master of Catholic Thought (MCT) program delivered by St. Jerome's University (SJU) was in good standing.

*The MCT is a quality program that clearly meets UW standards, goals, and outcomes.  
The three core faculty who teach and supervise in the program are highly qualified theologians who are invested in the program and committed to student success.*

A total of 4 recommendations were provided by the reviewers, regarding the development of a position description for the MCT Director, publishing a student handbook, and developing a 3–5-year strategic plan for recruitment, stakeholder engagement, curricular development and faculty complement. In response, the program created a plan outlining the specific actions proposed to address each recommendation as well as a timeline for implementation. The next cyclical review for this program is scheduled for 2025-2026.

#### **Enrollment over the past three years**

	<b>Graduate enrollment</b>
<b>2021</b>	7
<b>2020</b>	8
<b>2019</b>	4

\*based on Active Student Extract from Quest, September 20, 2021.

#### **Background**

In accordance with the University of Waterloo's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response of the Master of Catholic Thought program delivered by St. Jerome's University. A self-study (Volume I, II, III) was submitted to the Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs on December 12, 2019. The self-study (Volume I) presented the program descriptions and learning outcomes, an analytical assessment of the programs, including the data collected from a student survey, along with the standard data package prepared by the Office of Institutional Analysis & Planning (IAP). The CVs for each faculty member with a key role in the delivery of the program(s) were included in Volume II of the self-study.

From Volume III, two arm's-length external reviewers were selected by the Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs: Dr. Nicholas Olkovich, Assistant Professor and Marie Anne Blondin Chair in Catholic Theology, St. Mark's College; and Dr. Darren Dias, Associate Professor of Theology, St. Michael's College, University of Toronto.

Reviewers appraised the self-study documentation and conducted a virtual site visit to the University from June 22-25, 2020. An internal reviewer from the University of Waterloo, Dr. Hany Aziz, Professor of Electrical and Computer Engineering, was selected to accompany the external reviewers. The visit included interviews with the Vice-President, Academic & Provost; Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs; Interim President, St. Jerome's University; Interim Vice-President Academic and Dean (VPAD), St. Jerome's University; Dean of the Faculty of Arts; Interim Faculty of Arts Associate Dean of Graduate Studies; Program Director, as well as faculty members, staff and current graduate students. The Review Team was also able to meet with representatives from the library.

Following the site visit, the external reviewers submitted a report on their findings, with recommendations. Subsequently, the program responded to each recommendation and outlined a plan for implementation of the recommendations. Finally, the Dean responded to the external reviewers' recommendations, and endorsed the plans outlined by the program.

This final assessment report is based on information extracted, in many cases verbatim, from the self-study, the external reviewers' report, the program response and the Dean's response.

### **Program Characteristics**

Students in the Master of Catholic Thought (MCT) must take five required courses:

- CT 601: The Books of the Bible
- CT 602: The History of Catholicism
- CT 603: Foundations of Theology
- CT 604: Catholic Moral Life and Thought
- CT 605: The Prayer of the Church: Spirituality and Liturgy

In addition, students are required to take two elective courses. These can be from the list of courses available at St. Jerome's University or from appropriate graduate-level theology courses offered at another University or University College, including Conrad Grebel University College. Students must obtain a minimum overall average of 75, or B, in all courses.

Students are expected to complete a master's-level research paper, 35-50 pages [8,750-12,500 words] long, and to participate in an on-campus Integrative Seminar for CT 606.

To date, all students in the MCT program are part-time students, with students taking one course each term. Due to the decline, over the last few years, of student interest in the Humanities generally and in Religious Studies and Theology programs in particular, undergraduate students

graduating from their programs do not seem to be looking for degrees in theology programs. This is one reason we have not yet seen any full-time enrollments in the MCT program since the inception of the full-time stream in 2016. Attempts will be made to address the issue of full-time enrollment as part of the MCT recruitment plan to be implemented in 2020.

### **Summary of Strengths, Challenges and Weaknesses based on Self-Study**

#### **Strengths**

- quality of theological education;
- student experience; student satisfaction; support of students;
- quality of supervision;
- uniqueness of the program across Canada;
- institutional commitment to the program.

#### **Challenges**

- recruitment;
- implementation of the full-time option

#### **Weaknesses**

- limited course offerings

### **Summary of Key Findings from the External Reviewers**

The MCT is a quality program that clearly meets UW standards, goals, and outcomes. The three core faculty who teach and supervise in the program are highly qualified theologians who are invested in the program and committed to student success. The program also benefits from collaboration with three additional SJU faculty in English, Religious Studies and Philosophy. It is a very small program but constitutes a vibrant learning community. Current students and alumni speak highly of their experience in the program, citing the quality of teaching, in-class discussion, and research paper supervision. Alumni report deep appreciation for their learning experience.

### **Program Response to External Reviewers' Recommendations**

1. Within the next 12 months, develop a position-description for the MCT Director. Currently the position of MCT Director is an interim arrangement. Before a stable appointment is made, it would be beneficial to describe the roles and responsibilities and expected workload of the MCT Director. This is especially important as the program is entering a potentially new stage in its development.

### **Program Response**

Reflecting on the reviewers' remarks, the Committee believes it is time for the MCT program to strengthen its foundations, in particular at the level of program governance. The MCT program clearly needs a stable appointment of a program Director with the vision and experience needed to champion the program. Without this, it will be very difficult to carry the program through the important work needed to ensure that it can be a thriving program into the future. To bring this about, the SJU VPAD would need to make such an appointment, in accordance with the SJU Full-Time Collective Agreement. SJU leadership would also need to decide on the terms of this employment. The Committee welcomes the VPAD's recent formation of an MCT Committee, believing that an advisory body will help to increase program oversight, distribute the work needed to build up and run the program and to generate energy and support from the SJU community. In addition to terms of reference for the program Director, the Committee believes that terms of work for the Committee itself should be developed. Once we have the right structure in place for the program (in addition to a strategic plan – see recommendation 3), we will be able to move forward from a position of much greater strength. The acting Director and newly formed MCT Committee can assist in the development of a position-description as follows:

- Step 1:** The acting MCT Director, in consultation with the MCT Committee, creates a list of all tasks needed to run the MCT program;
- Step 2:** The VPAD reviews the task list and provides feedback;
- Step 3:** The acting MCT Director, in consultation with the MCT Committee, revises the task list and determines the appropriate division of labour and (as applicable) terms of reference for the MCT Director, the MCT Committee, the Academic Administrative Assistant (Morgan Regehr) and any other faculty and/or staff involved with the program (for instance, the members of the Application Review Committee);
- Step 4:** The VPAD reviews and presents the finalized terms of reference for the program Director and MCT Committee to SJU Academic Committee and/or Senate (as appropriate) for approval.
- Step 5:** As part of the appointment process for the MCT program Director, the VPAD creates a position-description drawing from the information gathered in steps 1 and 2.

### **Academic Dean's Response**

The VPAD supports the work that the MCT Committee has undertaken to develop a position-description for the MCT Director and terms of reference for the MCT

Committee. This work will continue in the 2021-2022 academic year as the position-description and terms of reference are finalized.

### **Faculty of Arts Dean's Response**

*No additional comment.*

2. In the next 12 months, publish a student handbook, or its equivalent. Students have stated that details about the degree are not clearly communicated to them. A brief handbook outlining dates, policies, course mapping, course offerings outside of SJU, auditing, etc. should be published on the website.

### **Program Response**

The reviewers' recommendation to publish a student handbook (or its equivalent) stems from the perceived need for improved communication between MCT program leadership and students. The MCT Committee agrees that this is a legitimate need, however we consider this to be a somewhat lower priority than recommendations 1 and 3, and have reflected this in the timeline at the end of this document. The acting Director, working with the Academic Administrative Assistant, has already taken some steps to rework the SJU–MCT website to provide clearer information for both current and prospective students, and plans to continue this work over the coming year. Whether we need a published handbook in addition to a clearer presentation of necessary information on our website is an open question. The MCT Committee will need to consider how necessary a handbook would be, and what information should be contained in it. The reviewers did not make specific recommendations here beyond offering a very brief list of items (“dates, policies, course mapping, course offerings outside of SJU, auditing, etc.”). We note also that because the MCT program is a conjoint program offered as part of the University of Waterloo's (UW) Faculty of Arts Graduate Studies, there is an additional level of complexity involved because some of the policies relevant to the program are the purview of UW rather than SJU. The following outlines the process for implementing recommendation #2:

- Step 1:** The acting MCT Director, in part by consulting comparable handbooks for other Masters-level theology programs in Canada, generates a draft list of items for inclusion in either a proposed student handbook or an expanded MCT website;
- Step 2:** The MCT Committee reviews the draft list and offers feedback. In discussion of this draft, the Committee also decides on whether or not the publication of a handbook is necessary, rather than simply updating the website.
- Step 3:** Based on the MCT Committee's determination, the MCT Director proceeds either to draft a handbook or to outline a renewed website;

**Step 4:** The MCT Committee, the VPAD, and the relevant parties in the UW GSPA review the proposed document/website;

**Step 5:** The MCT Director works with the Academic Administrative Assistant to publish the handbook on the website or to rework the website to include all necessary additional information.

#### **Academic Dean's Response**

The VPAD supports the MCT Committee's work to ensure that current and prospective students are able to access all the relevant information needed to complete the program in the way that is most appropriate to the context and delivery of the MCT program.

#### **Faculty of Arts Dean's Response**

No additional comment. I am confident that the MCT director and committee are well positioned to determine whether a comprehensive website or handbook would best serve its students in terms of providing information about the program.

3. Develop a 3-5-year strategic plan focusing on the following key result areas and containing appropriate key result indicators. The focus areas and indicators are simply suggestions based on the review; we recognize that the faculty will have to determine if these are appropriate.

**3.1 Recruitment:** the development of a recruitment strategy should include a focus on:

- i. web and social media presence;
- ii. relationship with undergraduate feeder schools;
- iii. explore possibilities of formal recognition of the MCT as a qualifying program for the Principals Qualification Program/Supervisory Officer Qualification Program;
- iv. explore possibilities of an agreement with the Diocese of Hamilton;
- v. Catholic School Boards, cohort courses for teachers.

#### **Program Response**

The MCT Committee is grateful for the reviewers' suggestions concerning a 3-5 year strategic plan for the program. Prior to the review, the program had already begun to act on some of the items that appear in the reviewers' recommendations. For instance, the VPAD appointed the current acting Director in large part to create and carry forward a growth and recruitment (G&R) plan for the program. The acting Director has been working together with the Academic Administrative Assistant (whom SJU also recently hired and whose portfolio includes assisting the MCT program) on various facets of G&R since his

appointment in Sept 2019 (with whatever time remained after focusing on guiding the program review process). The preliminary G&R plan developed during that time anticipated several of the reviewers' suggestions concerning recruitment, and we have already begun to act on some of these. Nevertheless, we acknowledge that in the years leading up to the review recruitment was neglected due to the "administrative shuffle" happening at SJU between 2017 and 2020. Our VPAD had to be brought in as interim President, and our Associate Dean had to be appointed as interim VPAD. This, along with the fact that a functioning MCT Committee had not yet been formed, created a leadership vacuum for the program. The VPAD has now taken several steps to help rectify this, and we are assured of SJU leadership's continuing support for the program in the coming years as we develop and implement our strategic plan.

The Committee welcomes in particular the reviewers' recommendation to increase our intentional outreach to MCT alumni. Since we received the reviewers' report, we have taken the first steps toward engaging alumni by administering a survey designed to elicit alumni preferences for continuing engagement with the program. We intend to increase the presence of the MCT program at events attended by MCT alumni and by representatives of other key stakeholder groups (see our response to 3.2 below). Moving forward with recruitment remains one of our top priorities, and will be the main work of the acting director for the rest of the 2020-2021 academic year once the program review is complete.

We would like to comment on some of the details of the reviewers' other suggestions concerning recruitment. We begin by noting that we have already begun to take steps toward 3.1.i. by performing an initial assessment of the MCT program's web presence (on the [www.sju.ca](http://www.sju.ca) and [www.uwaterloo.ca](http://www.uwaterloo.ca) websites), and revising those sites. There is certainly more to be done in this area, and this recommendation overlaps significantly with the communication issue identified in the program reviewers' recommendation #2. As part of our response to 3.1.i, we intend to hire a web/social media consultant in the coming months to form a strategy to increase the MCT program's visibility online. We also intend to conduct recorded interviews with MCT alumni to give them an opportunity to share their experience with the program, its importance to them, and what their degree has enabled them to do. Segments from these interviews can be used on the MCT website to help potential students understand the value of the program.

We have also begun work on 3.1.iii, 3.1.iv and 3.1.v by holding a preliminary conversation with an MCT alumna who is now serving as the Executive Director of the Institute for Catholic Education, and who previously served as Director of Catechesis for the Diocese of Hamilton for 12 years. This former student has helped us to identify further key contacts within the Diocese and the Catholic School Boards in Southwestern Ontario, and has agreed to assist us in the future as needed. Continuing to build the program's web and social media

presence, and to reach out to the groups identified in 3.1.iii-v will remain a core part of our G&R strategy moving forward. We expect that further conversations with other MCT alumni will help to put us in touch with people in their social and professional networks who can work together to establish education partnerships.

We are less certain about the importance of forming relationships with feeder schools (recommendation 3.1.ii), at least in the short term. We understand “feeder schools” to refer to Ontarian and Canadian undergraduate programs, such as Catholic Studies or Religious Studies, from which students might naturally move on to studies in a related MA program (Reviewer’s Report, p. 8). Our sense is that such students would most likely be looking for a full-time program. Although the MCT program has had a full-time program “on the books” for a few years now, we have up to today never enrolled a full-time student. Furthermore, as the reviewers point out, there are currently a number of issues that need to be addressed before it would be realistic to admit full-time students. Simply put, we do not have the requisite dedicated faculty, and we are not currently able to offer enough courses per year, to enable students to move through the program in less than two years. It is important to recall that the MCT program was originally shaped around a part-time clientele; as a result, the move toward a full-time program will require significant rethinking and restructuring. SJU leadership had begun this work in 2016-2017, when the full-time stream was created, but (as alluded to above) a number of unanticipated events conspired to draw attention away from the MCT program for the next few years.

Furthermore, the program faces a “chicken-and-egg” problem in that increased enrollment will motivate SJU leadership to invest in developing the program further, but a lack of such development will make it more difficult to attract students. The current VPAD at SJU has suggested that we should consider offering more courses only when we have more students in the program. This condition on growing the program in terms of faculty and courses, along with the need to strengthen the program according to its current identity, means that over the next few years we must focus our strategic plan on growing the part-time student body. Once we have a successful and thriving part-time stream in place, we will begin to implement the infrastructure needed to support the full-time stream. And at that point, establishing relationships with feeder schools would become more relevant.

As a final point in relation to recruitment, we note that our current VPAD, Cristina Vanin, who served as Director of the MCT program from its founding up to the end of August 2019, also sits at the table of a few important bodies, including the Partnership in Catholic Education for the Diocese of Hamilton. Our newly appointed President, Peter Meehan, attends a meeting with the Directors of Education and Bishop Crosby that takes place once in the Fall and once in the Spring. Finally, our outgoing (Interim) President and previous VPAD, Scott Kline, has established numerous connections within the Catholic community locally and provincially, and recently accepted a visiting scholar appointment at St. Mark’s in



B.C. to help develop a connection between the theology program there and partners in the B.C. Catholic health care system. As a member of the MCT Committee, Scott will be able to apply his experience and existing connections to help the MCT program to form similar partnerships. Our recruitment strategy should make use of these connections already established by and open to our SJU leaders.

### **Academic Dean's Response**

The VPAD appreciates the work that has been done to date to develop a strategic plan for the MCT program, including a recruitment strategy. Regular conversations have been taking place during the past academic year between SJU senior administration and the Acting MCT Director in support of nurturing the relationships needed to ensure that the value of this program for various Catholic agencies and institutions is clearly communicated and advertised. This strategic work will continue in the upcoming academic year with the intention of implementing some of the recruitment initiatives and directions that have been developed by the MCT Committee.

### **Faculty of Arts Dean's Response**

The Arts Graduate recruitment officer has been able to provide some recruitment support for the MCT, but having a dedicated web/social media consultant for the program would be quite beneficial for attracting an increasing number of students.

I note that the program advertises on its website that it is available full time. If SJU cannot offer it full time at this point, it should probably not state that it does so on the website.

**3.2 Stakeholder engagement:** Increased intentional engagement with relevant stakeholders:

- i. MCT graduates
- ii. SJU faculty from other divisions
- iii. Diocese of Hamilton
- iv. Catholic School Boards
- v. St Joseph's Healthcare System
- vi. Congregation of the Resurrection and the School Sisters of Notre Dame

Stakeholder engagement can be undertaken in a variety of ways, capitalize on current lecture series and events, specific outreach to the groups above, or an advisory board/group with stakeholder and faculty representation.

### **Program Response**

Increased stakeholder engagement has the potential to strengthen the MCT program in many ways, but the Committee wonders what specific ends the reviewers had in mind in suggesting that this should constitute a major component of the strategic plan. Without a clear sense of the purpose of building up stakeholder engagement, it is somewhat difficult to know how to prioritize this objective in relation to other program needs and priorities.

Speculating somewhat about the possible goals driving this recommendation, we note that half of the stakeholder groups mentioned by the reviewers are also included within the recruitment section (MCT graduates, Diocese of Hamilton, Catholic School Boards). Increased engagement with these partners would dovetail with the goal of boosting recruitment to the program. Increasing engagement with the other three stakeholder groups mentioned might serve a variety of purposes. For instance, the program could attempt to bring in SJU faculty from other divisions (ii) to teach elective courses in the MCT program. This would build on the program's ability to offer students diverse perspectives on the way theology can interact with other disciplines, which is something the reviewers identified as one of the program's strengths. The program could also build connections to the St. Joseph's Healthcare System, perhaps creating experiential learning opportunities and linking these to its bioethics offering (v). On the recruitment side, the MCT program can offer opportunities for theological education to Catholics and non-Catholics working in the Catholic Health Care system. This could appeal to administrators within that system who may be concerned about "mission slippage" at the leadership level given the fact that many are relatively unfamiliar with the Catholic theological tradition. Given the historical connection of SJU to the Congregation of the Resurrection and the School Sisters of Notre Dame (vi), it would not be difficult to find ways to increase engagement with these stakeholders, but the questions remain, to what end would the program undertake this, and with what degree of priority?

In the report, the reviewers briefly suggest some specific ways the program could increase stakeholder engagement. The program could make use of current lecture series at SJU (in particular the lectures in Catholic experience) and other events, presumably by inviting members of the stakeholder groups and thereby building a sense of connection to the program. The MCT Committee hopes to develop a 3-5 minute presentation that could be shared during such lecture events, which have historically been well-attended. The annual Feast held at SJU is another event that draws in many from the Catholic community. These events could feature a short segment in which (for instance) MCT alumni describe their experience with the program and how it has impacted their lives and careers. The reviewers suggest that the program could strike an advisory board/group that would be constituted by a mix of faculty and members of key stakeholder groups. The Committee sees how an advisory group of this sort could provide valuable advice to the program and could help to build and guide initiatives linking the program to other Catholic agencies. For instance,

students could be connected to some of the identified stakeholder groups through service learning / experiential learning opportunities. An ongoing connection with stakeholders could also increase the likelihood of bringing students into the program through connections of the sort the reviewers mention in the recruitment section.

### **Academic Dean's Response**

The MCT Committee is raising some good questions with regard to this recommendation. It is likely that the external reviewers saw an integral relationship between engaging with stakeholders and the development of a recruitment strategy, since those stakeholders could be of significant help in advertising the program and recommending the program to potential students. The VPAD supports the MCT Committee's ongoing work to prioritize the various elements of a robust strategic plan for the MCT program.

### **Faculty of Arts Dean's Response**

I am supportive of this recommendation and note that engagement and recruitment serve a dual purpose. The Master of Public Service degree in ARTS also has an advisory board which has served that program very well in terms of forming connections, keeping the curriculum on the cutting edge, and creating co-op opportunities. An advisory board for the MCT could offer similar benefits.

### **3.3 Curriculum:** curricular assessment and online delivery:

- i. building on the reputation of Waterloo and recent directions in higher education in Ontario and in the theological academy, explore the option of integrating service learning/experiential learning. This could be integrated into core courses, elective courses or the capstone project.
- ii. Since this is a course-based master's program, consider having 1 or 2 other capstones for the program (this may also positively impact recruitment) besides the research paper.
- iii. Develop a long-range course schedule and regular rotation that can assist in student course planning and institutional planning. This will be necessary if the program moves to full-time.
- iv. Explore the possibility of online offerings (in a synchronous format fully online or as a hybrid with students simultaneously online and in-person).

### **Program Response**

In response to 3.3.i, the Committee agrees that there exist excellent opportunities at SJU to incorporate service learning and/or experiential learning into the MCT program. Currently offered to undergraduate students, institution-recognized initiatives include the international Beyond Borders and SJU in Peru programs in addition to three locally-based programs: Beyond U, Encounter KW, and Minka.<sup>1</sup> Each of these initiatives connects in one way or another to social justice concerns that could easily be linked to theology via Catholic teachings on social justice and related elective courses in the MCT program. Furthermore, looking to our neighbours in the Master of Theological Studies (MTS) program at Conrad Grebel College, we note that the leaders of that program have found many ways to connect the academic side of theology with practical and pastoral opportunities in connection with the Mennonite community. The MCT program could benefit from development of similar opportunities within the Catholic community, including practica placements in parish ministries or in health care settings or other social services. A major connection the program could build would be to the Kitchener Working Centre, founded by two SJU alumni. SJU leaders have wanted to establish a greater connection with that organization for some time; the MCT program could help mobilize this and could offer unique benefits to the Working Centre given the greater maturity of our student body.

Recommendation 3.3.ii does not specify what sort of additional capstones might be included in the MCT program in addition to the research paper, but it is not difficult to imagine ways that options could be developed that could make the program more attractive to audiences less interested in the traditional thesis option. The idea of practica noted in the previous paragraph provide one example. This recommendation relates to both 3.1 and 3.2 in that greater connections between the MCT program and relevant partners and stakeholders will result in greater clarity concerning specifically what additional capstones would be most helpful / attractive to potential students.

In response to 3.3.iii, the Committee agrees that the program should develop a long-range course schedule and regular rotation, not only to assist students with planning but also for the same of institutional planning in relation to the program and its needs. We note, however, that for this to be realistic, the prior issue of dedicated faculty and increased student enrollment must be addressed. These points are explored further in our response to 3.4 below.

The MCT program has been wanting to open up possibilities for online offerings (3.3.iv) for some time. SJU has the technological capacity to allow students to participate in courses remotely, through live video chat. At least one instructor has had a student participate in their course in this way. The main steps that are needed to increase capacity for this and

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<sup>1</sup> For more information on these programs, visit [Centre for Responsible Citizenship | St. Jerome's University \(sju.ca\)](https://www.sju.ca/centre-for-responsible-citizenship).

make it more of a widespread reality are (1) increased instructor familiarity with the relevant technologies, and (2) advertising the possibility of doing the program remotely. In addition to these steps, the program will also need to clarify whether it will in fact require a residence component for students wanting to take the program remotely (as is stated on the program's website), and what that will involve practically. Currently we do not offer the Spring term introduction to the program, or the concluding seminar that were offered when this residency for remote students was first contemplated; the program will have to decide whether these elements can / should be reinstated.

### **Academic Dean's Response**

The VPAD supports the program's response to this recommendation that various aspects of curricular assessment and delivery be considered. Curriculum development can be incorporated into the broader MCT strategic plan. Furthermore, SJU does have extensive experience with experiential learning at the undergraduate level and could certainly look to make this available to MCT students. It is the case that the remote delivery of courses during the past academic year has meant that both faculty and the University are familiar with what is entailed in this type of course delivery.

### **Faculty of Arts Dean's Response**

I am supportive of this recommendation, particularly the advancement of experiential opportunities for its students. ARTS plans to expand work integrated learning for an increasing number of graduate students, and the MCT is well-placed to offer this additional experience in its program at SJU.

### **3.4 Faculty complement:**

- i. One of the three core faculty members has already retired and other retirements could be imminent. Since faculty research shapes the program, faculty regeneration will be key to shaping the future of the program.
- ii. Given the administrative load of current faculty members and the need to offer more courses each year if the program moves to include a full-time option, we recommend a stable, full-time faculty complement.
- iii. We note a lack of diversity in the faculty (core and otherwise) teaching in the MCT, in terms of both race and gender.

### **Program Response**

SJU senior administrators (VPAD, President) hold the responsibility for hiring new faculty members and developing policies around equitable hiring practices. Therefore, these recommendations seem to fall outside the purview of the MCT leadership (Director and Committee). At the same time, and as also noted above, several current SJU faculty members are able and willing to teach in the program, at least as far as elective courses go. Calls could be put out for elective courses, and the MCT Committee could vet responses. Elective courses make up 28% of the degree program's course requirements (2 of 7 courses). If the program's current elective courses cannot be offered (whether by full-time SJU faculty or by qualified contract academic staff), the program could reconsider its electives in light of the research interests of current SJU faculty who would be willing to teach in the program. We note also a connection between recommendation 3.4 and the first recommendation (concerning the appointment of a stable program Director), which is similarly outside the purview of the program itself. Nevertheless, the Committee agrees with the reviewers that the success of this program will depend on a stable faculty contingent, in order that the MCT program can continue to offer the courses and research paper supervision students need to complete the program. This would require replacements of retiring faculty with permanent positions and temporary replacements of faculty seconded to administrative roles at SJU. This is an urgent matter for the program's currently offered part-time stream and would be all the more important should the program begin to offer its full-time stream.

To date, no faculty members have been hired or appointed specifically to teach in the MCT program. Faculty have instead been drawn from SJU's Religious Studies department, which has fortuitously included a number of trained theologians capable of teaching and supervising in the program and of carrying out related research. There is no guarantee that this situation will continue in the future, since it depends on the ongoing stability of the Religious Studies program itself. The Committee believes that SJU administrators must determine the extent to which they can guarantee that an adequate complement of faculty capable of teaching in the MCT program will continue to exist at SJU. Furthermore, the Committee encourages SJU administrators to consider and respond appropriately to the lack of gender and racial diversity in the current MCT faculty when making future hiring decisions. Such considerations should also play a role in decisions to recruit faculty from other SJU departments and programs to teach in the MCT program.

### **Academic Dean's Response**

In the 2021-2022 academic year, the incoming SJU VPAD will begin the process of developing a new academic plan for St. Jerome's University. Part of that academic planning process will include discussions with regard to the directions that SJU will take with its academic programs. As part of the development of its strategic plan, the MCT program can advocate for the resources needed to grow and sustain the program.

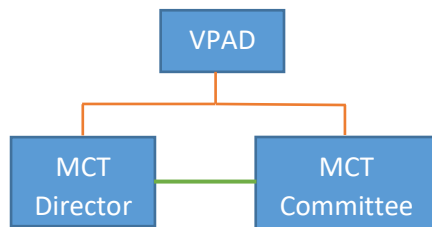
### Faculty of Arts Dean's Response

Since faculty complement lies in the province of SJU, not the Faculty of Arts, I have no additional comment here except to note that greater diversity in hiring practices would be well aligned with the objectives of the Arts Faculty as we move forward.

4. The Director of the MCT should submit an annual report on the MCT to the academic body that governs the program whether this is the Senate Council or the Academic Planning Committee.

### Program Response

The diagram below depicts the current structure of governance for the MCT program (within SJU), where the orange line represents authority/oversight, and the green line indicates that the Director chairs the MCT Committee:



The MCT program is the only graduate program offered by SJU. It does not normally have representation at Academic Committee, the body at SJU that oversees academic matters for undergraduate programs. Consequently, were the MCT Director to submit an annual report, it would need to go to the VPAD directly, perhaps after having been reviewed by the MCT Committee. It is unclear whether the VPAD would want to receive this sort of report, as the VPAD already receives annual reports from all faculty members, including the MCT Director, containing information related to service (including administrative service). An additional report could be redundant, unless its content was sufficiently distinct (if, for instance, it focused on a review of the program's goals and movement towards those goals, along with descriptive summaries of program activities and challenges). If our VPAD would find this useful, we could include filing such a report among the responsibilities of the program director.

We also note that the reviewers did not elaborate on what the contents of this report would include, or on what its purpose would be. We presume that the goals of such reporting would include ensuring accountability of the program Director and providing an opportunity for feedback and mentorship. The Committee agrees that such accountability

and mentorship by the VPAD could be beneficial, but wonders whether these are not provided for already in the annual report the Director must submit to the VPAD.

The Committee believes that, in making this recommendation, the reviewers were looking for greater accountability for the leadership in the MCT program. We agree that this is a commendable goal. We expect that accountability will increase as a natural result of the regular meeting of the newly formed (as of November 2020) MCT Committee / Advisory Body. Throughout the next 3-5 years, as we develop and implement our strategic plan, and then as we begin to monitor and evaluate our progress in relation to that plan, the MCT Committee plans to meet at least twice per academic term.

**Academic Dean's Response**

The VPAD supports the MCT Committee's work on developing and implementing a strategic plan that ensures accountability and considers the benefits of regular reporting on the MCT program to the appropriate individuals and bodies at St. Jerome's.

**Faculty of Arts Dean's Response**

No additional comment.

**Recommendations Not Selected for Implementation**

N/A



**Implementation Plan**

	<b>Recommendations</b>	<b>Proposed Actions</b>	<b>Responsibility for Leading and Resourcing (if applicable) the Actions</b>	<b>Timeline for addressing Recommendations</b>
1.	Within the next 12 months, develop a position-description for the MCT Director	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Generate list of tasks needed to run MCT program</li> <li>2. Review task list</li> <li>3. Revise task list and propose a distribution of labour / terms of reference for Program Director and Committee</li> <li>4. Review and approve terms of reference</li> <li>5. Appoint a suitable SJU faculty member into a stable (3-year term beginning Fall 2021) position as MCT program director</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Acting MCT Director with MCT Committee (and assistance as needed from Academic Admin Coordinator)</li> <li>2. VPAD</li> <li>3. Acting MCT Director with MCT Committee</li> <li>4. VPAD + SJU Academic Committee / SJU Senate</li> <li>5. VPAD / President</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Winter 2021</li> <li>2. Winter 2021</li> <li>3. Winter 2021</li> <li>4. Spring / Fall 2021</li> <li>5. Spring / Fall 2021</li> </ol>
2.	In the next 12 months, publish a student handbook, or its equivalent	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Propose list of items for inclusion in student handbook (or expanded MCT website)</li> <li>2. Review proposal and provide feedback</li> <li>3. Draft handbook/renewed website</li> <li>4. Review draft</li> <li>5. Publish handbook / renewed website</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Acting MCT Director</li> <li>2. MCT Committee</li> <li>3. Acting MCT Director with assistance from Academic Admin Coordinator</li> <li>4. MCT Committee, VPAD, relevant parties in UW GSPA</li> <li>5. Academic Admin Coordinator with guidance from Acting MCT Director</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Apr-May 2021</li> <li>2. May-June 2021</li> <li>3. June-Aug 2021</li> <li>4. Aug-Oct 2021</li> <li>5. Oct-Dec 2021</li> </ol>

<p>3.</p>	<p>Develop a 3-5-year strategic plan focusing on the following key result areas and containing appropriate key result indicators</p> <p><b>3.1 Recruitment:</b> the development of a recruitment strategy should include a focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. web and social media presence;</li> <li>ii. relationship with undergraduate feeder schools;</li> <li>iii. explore possibilities of formal recognition of the MCT as a qualifying program for the Principals Qualification Program/Supervisory Officer Qualification Program;</li> <li>iv. explore possibilities of an agreement with the Diocese of Hamilton;</li> <li>v. Catholic School Boards, cohort courses for teachers.</li> </ul> <p><b>3.2 Stakeholder engagement:</b> Increased intentional engagement with relevant stakeholders:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>i. MCT graduates</li> <li>ii. SJU faculty from other divisions</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Draft a comprehensive strategic plan beginning from the reviewers’ suggested “key result areas” and incorporating previous work by the acting director.</li> <li>2. Review proposed strategic plan</li> <li>3. Revise and begin to implement strategic plan</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Acting MCT Director and MCT Committee</li> <li>2. VPAD</li> <li>3. Acting MCT Director and MCT Committee</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Winter-Fall 2021</li> <li>2. Fall 2021</li> <li>3. Fall 2021 / Winter 2022</li> </ul>
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<p>iii. Diocese of Hamilton iv. Catholic School Boards v. St Joseph’s Healthcare System vi. Congregation of the Resurrection and the School Sisters of Notre Dame</p> <p><b>3.3 Curriculum:</b> curricular assessment and online delivery:</p> <p>i. building on the reputation of Waterloo and recent directions in higher education in Ontario and in the theological academy, explore the option of integrating service learning/experiential learning. This could be integrated into core courses, elective courses or the capstone project.</p> <p>ii. Since this is a course-based master’s program, consider having 1 or 2 other capstones for the program (this may also positively impact recruitment) besides the research paper.</p> <p>iii. Develop a long-range course schedule and regular rotation that can assist in student course planning and institutional</p>			
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	<p>planning. This will be necessary if the program moves to full-time.</p> <p>iv. Explore the possibility of online offerings (in a synchronous format fully online or as a hybrid with students simultaneously online and in-person).</p> <p><b>3.4 Faculty complement:</b></p> <p>i. One of the three core faculty members has already retired and other retirements could be imminent. Since faculty research shapes the program, faculty regeneration will be key to shaping the future of the program.</p> <p>ii. Given the administrative load of current faculty members and the need to offer more courses each year if the program moves to include a full-time option, we recommend a stable, full-time faculty complement.</p> <p>iii. We note a lack of diversity in the faculty (core and otherwise) teaching in the MCT, in terms of both race and gender.</p>			
4.	The Director of the MCT should submit an annual report on the	1. Acting MCT Director meets with current MCT Committee at least	1. Acting Director and MCT Committee	1. Winter 2021 – Spring 2021.

	<p>MCT to the academic body that governs the program</p>	<p>2 times per academic term to discuss the development, implementation, and evaluation of our 3-5 year strategic plan.</p> <p>2. MCT Director continues to meet with MCT Committee 2 times per academic term for this purpose.</p>	<p>2. Director and MCT Committee</p>	<p>2. Fall 2021- Spring 2026</p> <p>A first report was submitted to senior administration in January 2022; this will continue for the upcoming years.</p>
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The Department Chair/Director, in consultation with the VPAD and the Dean of Arts shall be responsible for the Implementation Plan.

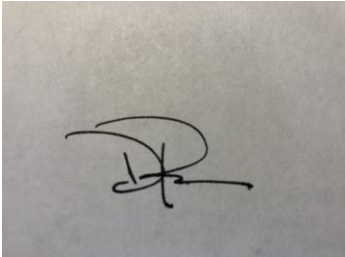
Date of next program review 2025-2026  
Date

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**Signatures of Approval**

  
Chair/Director March 22, 2022  
Date

  
AFIW Administrative Dean/Head (*For AFIW programs only*) August 10, 2022  
Date



17/viii/22  
Date

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Faculty Dean Date  
**Note:** AFIW programs fall under the Faculty of ARTS; however, the Dean does not have fiscal control nor authority over staffing and administration of the program.

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Associate Vice-President, Academic Date  
(For undergraduate and augmented programs)

*Jeffrey M. Coakle*

March 22, 2022

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Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs  
(For graduate and augmented programs)

Date