

Final Assessment Report

Applied Language Studies (Minor, Diploma)

July 2024

Executive Summary

Reviewers found that the Applied Language Studies (APPLS) Minor and Diploma delivered by Department of Cultural and Language Studies in Renison University College were in good standing.

“APPLS offers a practical and engaging Minor that is highly revered by students. It is an important component in language teaching and learning on campus.”

A total of three recommendations were provided by the reviewers, regarding hiring a tenure-track faculty, developing a vision for a major in the program, and student recruitment strategies. 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 2028-2029.

Enrollment over the past three years

	Minor	Diploma
2023-2024 (CURRENT YR)	11	0
2022-2022 (LAST YR)	13	1
2021-2022 (THREE YRS)	17	0

*Based on Active Student extract from Quest on July 8, 2024.

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 Applied Language Studies (APPLS) Minor and Diploma delivered by the Department of Cultural and Language Studies in Renison University College. A self-study (Volume I, II, III) was submitted to the Associate Vice-President, Academic on February 15, 2023. 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.

As a minor, this program was appraised by two faculty members from University of Waterloo, one with knowledge of the program and one from a faculty not associated with the minor: Dr. Carol Acton, Professor of English Language and Literature, University of Waterloo, and Dr. Ken Stark, Professor of Kinesiology and Health Science, University of Waterloo.

Reviewers appraised the self-study documentation and conducted a site visit to the University on May 24-26, 2023. The visit included interviews with the Associate Vice-President, Academic; Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affairs; Associate Vice President Academic and Dean (Renison University College); as well as faculty members, staff, alumni, and current undergraduate students. The Review Team also had an opportunity to meet with representatives from the library and recruitment.

Following the site visit, the 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 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

The APPLS Minor and Diploma are small, unique programs that explicitly emphasize language, language learning, and language teaching in students' lives. The strengths of the programs lie in the relevance of their content to students' career goals, and student's linguistic diversity, talent, and passion for the subject. The programs also receive broad support from instructors in language departments and units across campus and the broader community at the elementary and secondary school levels. The programs hold untapped promise for uniting diverse language units within the [Department of Culture and Language Studies \(CLS\)](#) at Renison University College.

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

Strengths

- APPLS programs are unique as UWaterloo does not have an applied linguistics or an education program. Thus, APPLS plans offer UWaterloo students' knowledge and experiences not found elsewhere on campus.
- APPLS students see the relevance of the APPLS courses and programs to their interests and career aspirations. See [Appendix L](#) pages 23-27, and [Appendix K](#) pages 17-21 for examples of enthusiastic support from alumni and current APPLS students, respectively.

As evidenced by student feedback 96 per cent of current students and 80 per cent of alumni would like to see a major in APPLS.

- APPLS programs bring together students from across the UWaterloo ecosystem representing students from many Faculties, programs and having a breadth of demographic profiles. APPLS programming intentionally strives to create inclusive spaces for all students to explore language as a learning and teaching tool. See [Appendix U](#) for a list of the programs across all faculty that APPLS students hail from in their diversity.
- APPLS courses are supported by language teaching colleagues from across campus. Additionally, Elementary and Secondary teachers from both Waterloo Regional District School Board and Waterloo Catholic District School Board welcome APPLS students into their classes for observational purposes each year.
- APPLS programs offer a promising pathway for CLS to draw together its diverse language units and offerings (Arabic, ASL, China, English Language Studies, Japan, Korea, and Mohawk). One possibility is to develop a major in languages and cultures, using APPLS courses as core courses in a major where students study multiple languages and cultures. This opportunity must be explored further by Renison and through collaboration with the language departments in Arts.

Challenges

- An Equity Agreement regulates the transfer of student tuition and government grants from UWaterloo to Renison University College. The Agreement regulates the amount of teaching at Renison by funding an agreed upon percentage of total teaching in Arts; without a renegotiation of this percentage, the amount of funding Renison receives under the agreement is not affected by teaching above or below the target. Assuming Renison continues to meet its teaching targets, there is no financial incentive to grow APPLS programming. Any growth in APPLS could only be done by reducing the teaching in other Renison programs. The Equity Agreement therefore makes it difficult to grow APPLS programming within Renison.
- The loss of the tenure-track position negatively impacted opportunities to grow the APPLS program. The current financial health of Renison University College makes it difficult to hire net new tenure-track faculty who could support program growth.

Weaknesses

- As APPLS is not a major, there is no direct recruiting for the program. Recruiting efforts are focused on attracting UW students in other majors. While there is interest from students, they are not always able to complete the minor because of the demands of their majors, which can constrain the number of electives students can complete. This means that while APPLS courses are full (at 15-25 students), the numbers of students in the minor or diploma are low.
- Currently, APPLS courses are not offered at the 100 level. The Department of Cultural and Language Studies would like to explore whether offering students the option to take APPLS courses at the beginning of their university studies would create greater awareness of APPLS programming, allowing more students to complete the APPLS Minor before they graduate.
- Each APPLS course is offered once per academic year (APPLS 205R and 301 are offered in fall terms; APPLS 304R and 306R are offered in winter terms). Students might find it easier to complete the APPLS Minor or Diploma if APPLS courses were offered more frequently.

Summary of Key Findings from the External Reviewers

“Engineering, Health, Math, and Science students appear to be enrolling in APPLS course in increasing numbers. There is also evidence of the program being sought out by plurilingual undergraduates whose numbers are increasing on campus with the increasing diversity of the Canadian populations. These are possible growth area for the unit to consider moving forward.

In the current environment at Renison, growth potential is limited by a focus on the immediate future and as long-term planning is tempered by finances, limited resources, and lack of commitment from upper Administration. Sustainability and growth of the program likely needs more stability in the Department itself that could be rectified by a Major program in which APPLS would reside.”

Program Response to External Reviewers’ Recommendations

1. As described in Section 2.6 Resources, a tenure track position existed for the group but after the original faculty member left, the position was taken away in the middle of the hiring of a replacement and a definite-term hire has been used. There was no acknowledgement from the upper administration on how damaging this was to the group in terms of their reputation and

morale. The experience and the uncertainty surrounding this position has negatively impacted the ability to develop long term plans for the APPLS program and the CLS Department, yet the upper administration expects the Department and program to present a vision before committing any resources to the group. A tenure track faculty member to support APPLS should be hired to restore the APPLS unit that would then allow the new hire to contribute to the planning and visioning process.

Program Response

In August 2023, CLS outlined for the Renison Vice President, Academic and Dean (VPAD) a vision for a major in Applied Languages and Cultures. This potential major would situate the APPLS courses at the center of a larger major with a focus on developing students' plurilingual and transcultural competencies. Such students would apply their knowledge to the fields of applied linguistics, teaching, diplomacy, translation, interpretation, intelligence work, speech language pathology, communication disorders, immigration, refugee studies, indigenous language reclamation and more. The major would provide a home for a tenure-track hire in APPLS; it would also see tenure-track hires of applied linguists in other departmental units, developing a cadre of applied linguists in the department to support the major.

Initial discussions among the Deans of Renison and Arts have indicated that new majors will not likely be implemented in the near- to mid-future; therefore, this plan is currently on hold, including plans to hire a tenure-track faculty member in APPLS.

VPAD's (Renison University College) Response

Renison supports the development of a major in the Culture and Language Studies Department to unify its diverse units, including APPLS. CLS has proposed an innovative major in Applied Languages and Culture that has the potential to develop sustaining collaborations with language units at UW. One of the challenges in the UW ecosystem is that language-related programming is decentralized, with programs spread across the Faculty of Arts, St. Jerome's University and Renison University College. The development of a major in CLS must be done in coordination and collaboration with other language units at UW to ensure program sustainability and avoid unnecessary and potentially damaging competition. Hiring tenure-track or continuing lecturers will be carefully managed to support programmatic needs in CLS and across Renison University College. For the purpose of the APPLS minor and diploma review, Renison commits to exploring the feasibility of developing a CLS major that would positively influence APPLS programming.

The external reviewers recommended that Renison hire a tenure-track faculty member to contribute to the planning and visioning process of developing a CLS major, which would, in turn, support the growth of APPLS courses and potentially strengthen the visibility of the

APPLS minor and diploma in the UW ecosystem. Renison recognizes the value of ongoing faculty in new program development; however, decisions about faculty complement can only be made with a plan to grow and sustain enrolment. I will not include the recommendation to hire a tenure-track faculty member in the implementation plan.

Dean's Response

The Faculty of Arts would welcome discussion with Renison on how best to benefit from our mutual strengths in the area of languages and cultures. Along with APPLS, the existing Cultural Identities minor might be a starting point for such conversations.

2. Renison Administration should take active steps to empower and support the faculty of CLS to develop a vision for a major for the Department. The first step would be a commitment to hiring a replacement tenure track position and then ensuring that this process is completed. After this hire, additional resources should be made available for the development of a major program. The Department and upper administration should follow the guidelines and flowchart at <https://uwaterloo.ca/academic-program-reviews/new-programs> to ensure productive and efficient development of the program with the Quality Assurance Office. Supports that may be needed could include a retreat for the Department, and assistance with coordinating with other Units in Renison and on main campus. The current chair of CLS and APPLS coordinator or another faculty member may need some course release specifically for new program development.

Program Response

The plan for a major in Applied Languages and Culture is currently on hold. If (when) launched, the path to a major will span several years. If approval from Renison administration, Arts administration, and Renison's Academic Council is secured, there will be opportunities to provide space for departmental deliberation and faculty course release (as appropriate).

VPAD's (Renison University College) Response

As noted earlier, Renison supports the development of a major in the Culture and Language Studies Department. The development of a major has the potential to bolster the APPLS minor and diploma, as well as other language programs in the academic unit. As noted by the Department Chair, the development of a major will span several years and must be done in collaboration with the Faculty of Arts. Renison will evaluate the kinds of support required and provide the necessary support needed to carry out the work. In the current fiscal climate, pursuing said major will require endorsement from the Faculty of Arts.

I have commented on the reviewers' recommendation to hire a tenure-track faculty member to support APPLS programming in my response to Recommendation 1.

Dean's Response

Please see comment under Recommendation 1.

3. Efforts should be made to market the diploma towards students in Engineering, Health, Math and Science. An interest in the APPLS courses has been demonstrated. These students have difficulty adding eight additional courses in the Arts to their existing programs to achieve the Minor. These students have also indicated that it can be difficult to find the APPLS program. APPLS should try to identify programs and groups of students in these non-Arts majors that may be interested in a diploma in APPLS. APPLS may want to re-examine the requirements of the diploma to facilitate the ability of these students to complete it but explore if there are breadth requirements in these non-Arts that APPLS courses could fulfill.

Program Response

The Department of Culture and Language Studies did have a dedicated Student Services and Marketing Assistant who began work to promote APPLS courses to non-Arts students. The individual established relationships with advisors in non-ARTS faculties and developed promotional materials targeting these students. Unfortunately, that individual has resigned and has not been replaced. Renison is now planning a restructuring of its marketing and recruitment unit, and this restructuring will hopefully foreground the work of promoting CLS courses in general, and more-specifically the APPLS courses. The new individual in this role will also seek ways in which APPLS courses could be used to meet breadth requirements of students from other faculties.

Once this individual left, the work of the Student Services and Marketing Assistant was renamed. The work is currently called Program Promotion work. APPLS program promotion work was taken on by a part-time employee who worked 15 hours/week. That position has since been cut. Following that cut, APPLS program promotion work was undertaken by a new hire in the Renison Registrar's Office. That person left the position in January 2025, and the position has not been replaced. Currently, administration is seeking to make the APPLS program redundant.

VPAD's (Renison University College) Response

As noted in the Department Chair's response, Renison is creating a sustainable and well-resourced plan to support marketing and recruitment needs and strategic enrollment management needs across the University College. The Administration acknowledges that CLS has unique marketing, recruitment, and student advising needs because of the service nature

of its courses, including those in the APPLS minor and diploma. We are committed to ensuring that, in the organizational restructuring initiative, CLS's needs will be serviced in ways that will help make the APPLS minor and diploma more visible to students in the UW ecosystem.

Additionally, I support CLS to explore how APPLS courses could fulfill degree-required breadth requirements in UW academic programs. This work would require consultation with stakeholders in UW Faculties and advocacy efforts on behalf of APPLS courses. Such activities

fall within the purview of the Departmental Chair and the APPLS Coordinator. I acknowledge that, currently, these roles are held by one person.

Dean's Response

We support efforts to make the minor and diploma more visible to students across the University.

Recommendations Not Selected for Implementation

Recommendation 1: Hire a tenure-track faculty member to support APPLS programming and contribute to the planning and visioning process of a new major.

The recommendation to hire a faculty member is noted; however, the hiring recommendation involves programmatic initiatives that fall outside of the scope of this program review.

Implementation Plan

	Recommendations	Proposed Actions	Responsibility for Leading and Resourcing (if applicable) the Actions	Timeline for addressing Recommendations
1.	Hire a tenure track faculty member to support APPLS.	This recommendation will not be implemented until a major in Applied Languages and Cultures can be launched. Renison's Vice President Academic and Dean (VPAD) will stay in conversation with the Dean of Arts about the possibility of creating a new major.	Vice President Academic, and Dean (VPAD)	VPAD will revisit discussion with Dean of Arts in two years (2026).
2.	Take active steps to empower and support the faculty of CLS to develop a vision for a major for the Department.	If initiated, the path to a major will span several years. If approval from Renison administration, Arts administration, and Renison's Academic Council is secured, there will be opportunities to provide space for departmental deliberation and faculty course release (as appropriate).	Chair of CLS is responsible for requesting supports. VPAD is responsible for resourcing supports.	This discussion will be revisited in two years (2026).
3.	Efforts should be made to market the diploma towards students in Engineering, Health, Math and Science.	Hire a new CLS student services and marketing recruitment assistant who can promote APPLS courses to non-Arts students, build relationships with non-Arts advisors, and seek new opportunities to promote APPLS courses.	The VPAD is responsible for resourcing supports.	Currently, APPLS is not being supported by any program promotion work. The administration is seeking to make the APPLS plan redundant.

The Department Chair/Director, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty shall be responsible for the Implementation Plan.

Date of next program review

2028-2029

Date

Signatures of Approval

Julia Williams

September 3, 2024

Chair/Director

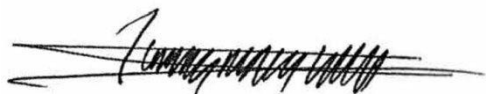
Date

Peter Hartman

September 3, 2024

AFIW Administrative Dean/Head (*For AFIW programs only*)

Date



September 18, 2024

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.

Dan DeVidi

August 30, 2024

Associate Vice-President, Academic

Date

(For undergraduate and augmented programs)