

# Final Assessment Report

## Intercultural German Studies (MA)

### June 2017

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#### **Summary of the Program Review:**

In accordance with the University Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external evaluation and the internal response and assessments of the program (MA) delivered by the Department of German and Slavic Studies (GSS). A self-study (Volume I) was submitted to the Associate Provost, Graduate Studies (APGS) on September 14, 2016. The self-study presented the program descriptions and learning outcomes, an analytical assessment of this program, and program data including both the standard package prepared by the Office of Institutional Analysis & Planning (IAP) and data collected from a student survey. Appended were the course outlines for all courses in the program and the CVs (Volume II) for each full-time faculty member in the Department.

Two arm's-length external reviewers (Volume III), (Dr. Glenn Levine, Professor of German, University of California and Dr. Stephan Jaeger, Professor of German, University of Manitoba) were ranked and selected by the APGS; in addition one internal reviewer (Dr. Stephen Evans, Professor of Earth and Environmental Sciences) was selected by the APGS.

The reviewers were provided the self-study documentation and then conducted a site visit to the University of Waterloo on October 13-14, 2016. The visit included interviews with: the Vice-President Academic and Provost; Associate Provost, Graduate Studies; Dean of the Faculty of Arts; Arts Associate Dean of Graduate Studies; Chair of the Department of Germanic and Slavic Studies; Faculty members; and staff. The review team also conducted meetings with a group of current graduate students. Because this program is joint with the Universitaet Mannheim in Germany, the graduate student meeting took place both in Waterloo and via the internet with students currently in Germany. Done through Adobe Connect with reviewers in a faculty member's office and with four IcGS MA students in Mannheim (3 Canadian cohort; 1 German cohort).

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

#### **Program characteristics:**

Master of Arts in Intercultural German (IcGS) is an innovative, Bologna-compliant MA program, first accredited in 2011, in both Ontario, Canada and Baden-Wuerttemberg, Germany. IcGS

combines the academic study of linguistics/applied linguistics and literary/cultural/media studies with intercultural and experiential elements. Over two-years, study is divided equally between the University of Waterloo and Universitaet Mannheim, where co-mingled student cohorts from each institution follow an almost identical course of study that also corresponds to each university's specific institutional structure.

### **Summary of strengths, challenges and weaknesses based on self-study:**

#### **Strengths**

- Unique intercultural focus
- Excellent collaborative relationship between University of Waterloo and partner institution in Germany (Universitaet Mannheim)
- Student exposure experiential learning by studying and living abroad
- High student satisfaction
- Since its inauguration, the program has had no withdrawals and a 100% graduation rate
- Grant-funded research on best practices in studying abroad

#### **Challenges**

- Recruitment of Canadian students
- Increasing visibility of program in Canada and abroad
- Restricted selection of courses at University of Waterloo
- Co-supervising/co-assessing theses written in Germany ( Recommendation 5)
- Intricate program structure requires a larger than usual amount of student advising
- Challenge in securing funding as Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst (DAAD) or German Student Exchange Service in English, cancelled their support which means students lose some financial support that helped pay for some subsistence
- Lack of available teaching and student space within Department

#### **Weaknesses**

- Immense efforts to attract Canadian students have not always resulted in the targeted enrolment numbers
- Space issues as mentioned under "Challenges"
- Measuring long-term program outcomes as German students tend to be disinterested in contact with their alma mater

**Summary of key findings from the external reviewers:**

MA in Intercultural German goes well beyond any conventional MA to integrate experiential learning, intercultural learning and engagement in nearly every phase of the student's educational experience. The IcGS program is genuinely innovative and should serve as a model not only to German Studies programs in Canada, the US and elsewhere, but rather also for other programs offering graduate degrees in languages other than English.

The reviewers were "deeply impressed with how well all faculty members work together, which is, unfortunately, uncommon in a large department with this sort of balance between applied linguistics/linguistics and literature/media studies. An interdisciplinary, intercultural program of this sort with a high output in experiential learning and an international joint degree requires a very well-functioning, enthusiastic and highly committed faculty. We are pleased to report that this is the case."

"What struck us the most was that the program does not have weakness in its pedagogy and programmatic set-up, or in its administration or advising protocols. The only areas for improvement we observed have to do with promotion of the program and recruitment of students, which we detail in the final Recommendations section below."

**Program response to external reviewer recommendations:****Recommendations**

1. **Change of admission requirements.** We recommend that the program prioritize attracting greater numbers of potentially qualified domestic Canadian applicants to the program...[by] reforming the program admission requirements, to open it to students general German major programs...as well as in other fields in the humanities and social sciences....such as history, philosophy, art history, European Studies, political science, and international studies (instead of restricting it to students from German programs). This should be implemented as soon as possible.

**Response**

The GSS Department fully agrees with this recommendation, and voted on changing the wording for the admission requirements at its November 2016 meeting. Pending further University approval, these changes will be implemented in Winter 2017. This will allow

in particular Canadian applicants whose background has not been in German Studies perse to potentially enrol in this graduate program, since the Canadian pool of optional students in German in Canada is small.

Even though IcGS has succeeded in attracting students to the program from across the country, the GSS faculty understand that we need to continue recruiting a sufficient number of excellent Canadian students as well as potentially broaden our recruitment potential.

2. **Create one study position for a US student.** “Simply put, to our knowledge there is no program in the US that even comes close to the innovative goals, structure, depth and breadth of curricular content, and programmatic outcomes of the Waterloo-Mannheim joint degree program. We therefore recommend that the University of Waterloo facilitate the allocation of the funds to support one member of each year’s cohort from the United States, which according to discussions during our visit would cost roughly \$30,000 per student (for the two-year period of the MA program). This would permit the Department to promote the program widely in the US, which would mean Waterloo could then accept the very best student from among the applicants.”

#### **Response**

The Department fully agrees with the reasoning of the reviewers. We also welcome the recommendation and are eager to find the funding to carry it out. Currently, resourcing such a position are beyond the Department's resources. The Department will continue to apply for external scholarships for students and explore other options to increase base funding.

3. **Promotion of the program at home and abroad.** The reviewers suggest that although Graduate Studies and the Faculty of Arts already provide some support regarding marketing of program, they argue that “Graduate Studies and the Faculty of Arts provide ample support for the production and dissemination of both paper and digital promotional materials, including posters, brochures, fliers, etc.” The reviewers also recommend the Department should “consider facilitating travel of current students or recent graduates to institutions around Canada to promote the program.”

#### **Response**

The Department agrees that there is a need to update existing promotional materials (e.g. a poster done internally, the Arts flyer promoting all German grad programs together). A flyer specifically promoting the IcGS is now in the works. While the Department is grateful for the financial and personal resources made available for this purpose from the Faculty of Arts for this redesign, the reviewers point out the need for

expert help, which would require additional financial support. Also, the Departments' students and recent graduates are interested in promoting the program at other institutions, and we are exploring ways to raise the financial support to do so. We are currently exploring a more systematic approach to following the professional paths of our students for their post-graduation achievements for which the Chair will solicit the input of the Alumni Office. The GSS faculty has started promoting the IcGS program in the Departments' first and second year German program and a more systematic approach for this is under development.

4. **Importance of campus profile and visibility.** The reviewers encourage the Faculty of Arts and the Graduate Studies Office to highlight the IcGS program as a model of intercultural engagement and international institutional cooperation and experiential learning.

#### **Response**

The Department welcomes this recommendation and the GSS faculty will discuss a plan with the Arts Communication Manager on a date to be scheduled for winter 2017. A Graduate Recruitment/Promotion Office at the University (a possibility currently being discussed) or other University support would be useful.

5. **Programmatic recommendations: Advising of students.** Canadian students should, prior to departure for Mannheim or upon arrival, be provided with a detailed orientation on aspects of the German academic system, including the writing of German academic papers, class presentations, and other genres of academic work. Additionally, Waterloo students' advising upon their return to campus should be enhanced. Lastly, both groups of students, would benefit from more concrete and targeted advising for the summer period between the two respective study abroad semesters.

#### **Response**

The Department welcomes these recommendations. The Graduate Officer has integrated the "orientation on aspects of the German academic system" into the already existing pre-departure workshop, and will continue to do so. We are also working with the University of Waterloo library to acquire some reference works on the German academic system, especially the writing of German academic papers, class presentations, and other genres of academic work. With regard to better advising for the summer period and for the time after, a committee of faculty, current students and

alumni chaired by the Graduate Officer is in the process of developing a plan for better procedures. Advising will also be done with regard to the restricted number of courses the department is able to offer (5-6 per year). There is the possibility for students to take other courses in the Faculty of Arts.

6. **Funding.** This is not a formal recommendation, but embedded within the reviewers' report: Market program as "fully funded" since students receive a strong and competitive financial package with the base funding of \$15,000/year (disregarding the fees for international students), an additional travel grant through donations received by the Waterloo Centre for German Studies (WCGS) on the UW campus, and a small remuneration for experiential learning components that students receive from our partners in Mannheim

#### **Response**

Although not a formal recommendation, but a statement by the reviewers, this is our comment: As long as these funds are stable, the GSS faculty feels that this program can indeed be called "fully funded". In addition, the department, together with partners in Germany, will continue to apply for external funding, whenever possible, in order to leverage the costs for students, which are not inconsiderable due to the international aspect of the program and to the high demands that require a full-time commitment such that students cannot take on part-time work outside of their TA/RA work. One present example to acquiring such external funding is the successful Erasmus+ application by Mannheim partners for 2017-2018, which includes funding for Joint IcGS MA students' and IcGS staff mobility.

**Implementation Plan:**

	Recommendations	Proposed Actions	Responsibility for Leading and Resourcing (if applicable) the Actions	Timeline for addressing Recommendations
1.	<b><i>Change of admission requirements</i></b>	Graduate Officer rewrote admission requirements	Graduate Officer	Nov 2016 - vote in department done W 2017 - passed GAG
2.	<b><i>Study position for a US student</i></b>	Initial discussion with Linda Warley and Jeff Casello at December 2016 Department meeting	Graduate Officer/Chair initiated discussion; resourcing beyond department	Under consideration by the AVPGSPA and Associate Dean, Graduate Studies
3.	<b><i>Promotion of the program at home and abroad</i></b>	a) promotion emails to German Studies lists in Canada/internationally, emails to colleagues at universities in the US sent; create lcGS flyer (rather than poster and bookmarks as in the past) b) explore possibility of student travel for promotion c) devise strategies for better tracking of alumni	a) Graduate Officer/GSS faculty; Graduate Officer/ Faculty Associate Dean of Arts b) pending on resourcing beyond Department c) Department/Alumni Officer d) UG Officer	a) promotion e-mails done in Fall 2016; will be done every year; lcGS flyer by Fall 2017 b) Ongoing c) by December 2017 d) Immediately



		d) promoting in first and second year courses (1 <sup>st</sup> priority)		
4.	<b><i>Campus profile and visibility</i></b>	Find strategy/plan for opportunities to promote the IcGS program on campus	Chair/Graduate Officer, Arts Communication Manager	Create 2-year plan by June 2017
5.	<b><i>Advising of students</i></b> <b><i>a) pre-departure (esp. German system)</i></b> <b><i>b) return and summer advising</i></b>	a) make part of fall workshops  b) discuss and create advising procedure plan	a) Graduate Officer, library liaison b) Graduate Officer/department	a) have in place for Fall 2017 b) agreed on procedure in April 2017
6.	<b><i>Funding</i></b>	Explore other potential funds to leverage the costs for this international program	GSS faculty, Chair	In Fall (before application cycle), on a yearly basis





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



Date of next program review: \_\_\_\_\_ 2024  
Date

**Signatures of Approval:**

 \_\_\_\_\_ 20 Oct. 2017  
Chair/Director Date

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

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Faculty Dean Date

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

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Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Post-Doctoral Affairs Date  
(Formerly known as the Associate Provost, Graduate Studies)  
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AFIW Administrative Dean/Head (For AFIW programs only) Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
Faculty Dean Date

19/x/17

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

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Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Post-Doctoral Affairs (Formerly known as the Associate Provost, Graduate Studies) (For Graduate and augmented programs) Date



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Date

Intercultural German Studies (MA)

**Signatures of Approval:**

 20 Oct. 2017  
Chair/Director Date

\_\_\_\_\_  
AFIW Administrative Dean/Head (For AFIW programs only) Date

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Faculty Dean Date

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

 2 Nov. 2017

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Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Post-Doctoral Affairs Date  
(Formerly known as the Associate Provost, Graduate Studies)  
(For Graduate and augmented programs)