

Final Assessment Report Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies (BA, Minor) November 2019

Executive Summary

External reviewers found that the programs (BA, Minor) delivered by the Department of Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies at St. Jerome's University (SJU), which is federated with the University of Waterloo, were in good standing.

"The Department of Sexuality, Marriage, and Family is the only of its kind in Canada. As reviewers we were truly impressed by the uniqueness of the program, and what we mean by this is that this program stands alone in relation to other similar programs."

A total of 7 recommendations were provided by the reviewers. 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 2024-2025.

Student Complement (All Years)*

	General	Honours	Со-ор	Minor	Diploma
Fall 2019	6	49	8	28	3
Fall 2018	11	41	7	29	1
Fall 2017	11	32	3	30	0

^{*}based on Active Students Extract (Quest) accessed December 16, 2019

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 Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies programs (BA, Minor). A self-study (Volume I, II, III) was submitted to the Associate Vice-President, Academic on December 20, 2018. 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 programs were included in Volume II of the self-study.

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From Volume III, two arm's-length external reviewers were selected by the Associate Vice-President, Academic: Dr. Jonathan Allan, Professor of Gender and Women's Studies, Brandon University, and Dr. Andrea O'Reilly, Professor of Gender, Sexuality and Women's Studies, York University.

Reviewers appraised the self-study documentation and conducted a site visit to the University on March 18-19, 2019. An internal reviewer from the University of Waterloo, Dr. Barbara Moffatt, Professor of Biology, was selected to accompany the external reviewers. The visit included interviews with the Associate Vice-President, Academic; President and Vice Chancellor of SJU, Dean of the Faculty of Arts; Dean of SJU; Chair of SMF; as well as faculty members, staff and current students. The Review Team also had an opportunity to tour the SJU campus, and meet with representatives from the Library and Co-operative Education.

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

Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies (SMF) offers a BA, Minor and Diploma. The goal of SMF is to promote interdisciplinary scholarship and research in topics such as gender, sexualities, relationships, and families. In the course offerings, special attention is devoted to developing an ethical perspective and considering issues of social justice in order to develop autonomy and professional capacity for responsible citizenship. Instructors strive to create learning environments that respect academic freedom, encourage higher order learning and skills development, and promote inclusivity and anti-oppressive practices. Students are encouraged to think critically and self-reflectively about material and apply it to the social world.

Summary of strengths, challenges and weaknesses based on self-study Strengths

- The Department is a small one, but is vibrant and close-knit, with students that match its faculty's enthusiasm, positivity, and dedication to social justice.
- The interdisciplinary nature of the faculty allows topics and issues to be addressed critically from a number of intersecting perspectives, and motivates students to think critically about the world around them.
- SMF plans are incredibly unique when compared with programs at other schools, as SMF is the only program in the country that combines studies of sexualities, relationships, and families.
- The SMF Department also prides itself on its ability to foster and support student research. The SMF Research Symposium is a unique opportunity for undergraduate students, in particular, to both attend/experience, and actively participate in an academic research conference.

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Challenges

- In terms of faculty, the Department has experienced both gains and losses since the last review, and at the time of this self-assessment is still fraught with resource deficiencies. This has had an impact on SMF's ability to sustain and grow the program.
- The SMF Department has continued to broaden its reach and visibility on campus and in the community, and continued to offer special events/lectures/workshops to support students. That said, sustainability is a concern at this time. The faculty are understandably feeling depleted and tired, which will certainly have impacts on the quality and range of services or experiences the Department is able to offer moving forward.
- The Department has had difficulty retaining faculty whose primary discipline is in the
 Humanities. While interdisciplinarity does not require integration across the social
 sciences and humanities, having both areas represented in SMF faculty may be a worthy
 goal. Existing faculty are clearly social science researchers and instructors, many of whom
 are also interdisciplinary in their approach to social science more generally.

Summary of key findings from the external reviewers

The reviewers were impressed by the uniqueness of the program. While many Canadian Universities, as noted in the program review, have programs in Gender Studies, Women's Studies, Sexuality Studies, or some combination of those, this program focuses on sexuality, marriage (or relationships), and family. This is achieved by pulling from some of the methods and theories of Women's and Gender Studies, while drawing on a range of other methods and theories from other disciplines, for instance, family studies and psychology.

The reviewers voiced that they see huge potential for growth, particularly with a graduate program, and introducing additional content in the field of Motherhood Studies. However, this potential has not and cannot yet be realized due to severe shortage in faculty.

Program response to external reviewers' recommendations

Recommendations

1. We recommend that Sexuality, Marriage, and Family Studies undertake a review of its name, a concern that was brought up by nearly everyone. But we are not recommending a wholescale change, as most people mentioned a discomfort only with the use of "marriage," but not "sexuality" or "family." As such, our recommendation would be to pluralize sexuality and family, and find an additional word to better reflect the vastness of the relationships studied and considered in the courses.

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Response

SMF fully supports this recommendation. In fact, the program has been engaged in informal (and formal) discussions about a name change since the previous review. They had engaged in a Visioning/Strategic Planning exercise where a name-change was discussed, however, progress on this stalled due to the faculty losses that followed a few months later.

The program is in favour of pluralizing both the "Sexuality" and "Family" parts of the name. In fact, these pluralized forms are often used in an effort to be inclusive and to better represent what they study in SMF. Similarly, the word "Marriage" is rarely used to describe SMF; it is often replaced with the word "Relationships". Faculty members also discussed their fondness for, and familiarity with, the SMF acronym, which is also very much a part of the identity of alumni (i.e., SMFers). As such, SMF believes a name-change will be a significant alteration. It will also require the creation of a new logo and associated swag items. Therefore, a name-change will need to be well-planned so as to include a communication strategy with particular attention to the impact on former graduates who identify with "SMF" as part of their educational experience and identities. The development of a new logo and new swag items may require collaboration with an external organization to actualize a professional and appropriate logo; as such, the process may have financial implications.

2. We recommend that [...]'s position be formalized so as to ensure the long-term stability of the program. This formal role should be at the Lecturer level or at the Assistant Professor level, in the latter case, where professional and clinical experience is recognized as being similar to the PhD qualification.

Response

SMF is in full support of formalizing the position currently held by a Definite Term Appointment (DTA) (as of May, 2019). Prior to holding the DTA, this member was a regular Contract Academic Staff (sessional) in the Department (for approximately 15 years) who taught 4-5 core courses annually and held the Practicum Coordinator position for the last several years. During this time, the member contributed regularly to departmental service, often beyond the expectations of their contract. They are considered a full member of the SMF Department and this recommendation serves to formalize what is already in place.

With the number of losses that SMF has experienced over the years, the member has been a consistent, committed, and stabilizing force for SMF and its students. This is an integral position in the Department given the administrative weight associated with chairing SMF. As the reviewers note, the administrative weight on the current Department Chair is not sustainable. The program feels that formalizing this member's position would enable greater delegation of departmental service, which would relieve some of the administrative and leadership responsibilities of the Department Chair. The program emphasizes that every

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effort should be made to prevent the instability and disruption that the loss of this member would cause.

SMF understands that the formalization of this member's position needs to align with the SJU Academic Staff Association (ASA) Collective Agreement (CA), and they look forward to working with the SJU Vice President Academic and Dean (VPAD) and the SJU-ASA to realize this goal.

- 3. We recommend that at least two new hires 100% SMF be added to the faculty complement (one could presumably organize this as 4 at 50% SMF). Over the past years, we note that many faculty members have left SMF, some for administration, [...], others for different positions, [...], others have renegotiated their contracts after hire, [...], and another has been on extended medical leave. In total, we estimate these losses at at least 200%, which is how we have arrived at a figure of two full-time hires.
 - a. We are also recommending that these hires complement the existing faculty, rather than fill in perceived gaps in the program. While a targeted hire in the humanities would be nice, it may not be the best approach given the direction and vision of the program. We would recommend a more holistic approach that hires in a "theme," for instance, "gender and aging," or "gender, multiculturalism, and transnationalism."

Response

SMF is in full support of the reviewers' recommendation to focus on stability in departmental resources (i.e., faculty) by adding the equivalent of two new hires to the SMF faculty complement. The Department welcomes the flexibility the reviewers suggest in terms of how this 200% is organized (e.g., across 2-4 faculty members). Replenishing lost faculty resources would enable a focus on stabilizing the Department while increasing diversity within the faculty complement (which is very homogeneous in terms of gender and age -Generation X). SMF welcomes attracting and retaining younger scholars, including those who identify as men, and people of colour (among other social locations that are different from those of existing members).

SMF also appreciates the reviewers' additional recommendation under 3(a) and agrees that targeted hires may not serve SMF well. Instead, SMF has a desire to attract people who are a good fit, complement the program (and its faculty), and can see themselves in the program. SMF needs to focus on attracting and retaining faculty. The program appreciates the reviewers' assessment of SMF as a strong and vibrant program, "...the only of its kind in Canada...we were truly impressed by the uniqueness of the program...that this program stands alone in relation to other similar programs." While reviewers noted SMF's "huge potential for growth," they also cautioned that, "the program is in a state of precarity, not because of a lack of students, but because of a lack of consistent resources and faculty

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complement." SMF is in full agreement with the reviewers' assessment that stability must be their short-term goal. Current SMF members are depleted and drained, and expanding resources is one way to promote wellness among the existing faculty complement. Moreover, in order to sustain this one-of-a-kind program, continuity in resources is required.

SMF agrees that the first step should be to strengthen and stabilize the current departmental structure and roots by adding to the existing faculty complement (so that they may focus on what is already working and build on existing capacities within the Department). Once new faculty are hired and the foundation is more secure, the SMF Department can engage in a visioning process to establish future directions, specializations, graduate programs, and so forth. Working collaboratively and involving new faculty in this process will foster a sense of belonging and commitment.

4. We recommend that the University in conjunction with the Department undertake discussions about certification and certificate programs. We note in the review, for instance, that the department is short of one course to fulfill a certification requirement. This should be resolved and addressed. Students and post-degree students desire more formal certification recognition and this could contribute to the growth of the program.

Response

Since the self-study was completed, the program has added two new courses that fulfil the Certified Family Life Educator (CFLE) certification with the National Council on Family Relations (NCFR). These courses have received institutional approval and will be in the 2019-2020 Undergraduate Calendar. The program has yet to go through the process of review and accreditation by NCFR, but will do so in the near future.

The Department has several ideas for additional "certificates" that would be sought-after by SMF graduates, graduates from related programs, and community partners in the human services field. SMF welcomes the opportunity to work with the SJU administration to create and launch such certificate courses or programs. However, realization of these new opportunities will only be possible once a critical mass of SMF faculty has been established. As reviewers noted, the short-term goal must be to maintain SMF's current responsibilities to existing students while they work to expand their resources, re-structure, and vision for the future.

5. We recommend that SMF and the University establish an "Ambassador's Program." We were thoroughly impressed by all of the students we met, and they are, in many ways, the best advocates for SMF because they are choosing to be there, they are excited about their work and studies. These students would go to High Schools or Recruitment events.

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Response

SMF was delighted to hear how impressed the reviewers were with the students. They are truly a joy to work with and, as noted, are the strongest advocates for SMF both within the University and beyond. However, SMF struggles with making this recommendation (i.e., an "Ambassador's Program") something that is student-driven rather than faculty-driven.

In the past, students have attempted to form a formal SMF Student Society at the University of Waterloo, but were not able to see it through, in part due to the senior students driving the process graduating before it was completed. Since then, a few students have tried to take it up, but nothing formal resulted from their interest until this past year (2019-2020) — see below.

Recruitment initiatives are highly regulated at the University. While SMF students can volunteer to participate in campus Open Houses (e.g., March Break Open House) as they currently do, recruiting at the high-school level is organized and controlled by UWaterloo and SJU recruitment departments. Students' enthusiasm and support for SMF could be channeled by including them in the future Visioning/Strategic Planning exercise. This would only be feasible once a critical mass of faculty resources is secured, as none of the current faculty members could spearhead this. Therefore, SMF sees this as a longer-term goal.

In Winter 2020, after the absence of a student-run society was discussed in the capstone course, one student took the initiative and established the SMF Student Society (as one of the University of Waterloo designated student societies). We have been working closely with the Society President on a number of initiatives and will continue this collaborative relationship moving forward.

6. We recommend that the University in conjunction with the Department begin to undertake discussions about a graduate program; however, this is, we stress, a long-term goal once the faculty complement has been established. In our discussions with students, a meeting at which we ran out of chairs and had 20 students, 100% of them in our straw poll desired a graduate program in SMF and if afforded the opportunity would stay at St Jerome's for the graduate program. Moreover, we understand from discussions that a similar program at Guelph receives some 400 applications, and yet only 8 students are admitted. It seems to us that there is a potential here to develop a Master of Arts in the long term, before the next review, and even thinking in the long long-term, perhaps a PhD program could be established, especially given how many people are turned down by Guelph. We do not see this as St. Jerome's University becoming a "second choice," but rather as offering something unique that fills a gap and a need.

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Response

SMF is very interested in pursuing one or more graduate programs in the future. This was also mentioned in the previous program review, but given the instability in departmental resources, has not come to fruition.

SMF feels that this should be a long-term goal once the faculty complement has been established. A clinical graduate program (such as the one students discussed with the reviewers) would be of interest to a specific sub-group of SMF students – those who are interested in clinical training and certification. The clinically-oriented students tend to apply to graduate programs in Social Work, Counselling, and Couple and Family Therapy. Other SMF graduates have pursued research-intensive graduate programs in areas such as sexuality/sexology, public health, family studies, and social justice. SMF would like to remain open to both research- and clinical-focused graduate programs in order to appeal to a diverse student body. Discussions of future directions in terms of graduate programs will be part of the Visioning exercise.

7. We would also recommend, with the development of a graduate program, that SMF may look outward and consider appointing "adjunct faculty," who are able to contribute to the teaching of the program and undertake some 'supervisory' roles in thesis courses.

Response

Connected to Recommendation #3, SMF is eager to build partnerships across Departments (and Faculties) at the University of Waterloo and beyond. This will be explored when graduate programs become a real possibility. In the meantime, the flexibility captured in Recommendation #3 offers the opportunity to explore formal partnerships with other Departments – from the Faculty of Arts to other faculties, such as the School of Public Health and Health Systems – whose existing faculty may have teaching and research interests that fit with SMF. Such formal partnerships may require the creative reading and employment of the SJU Collective Agreement, but SMF is confident that the Administrators at both St. Jerome's and the University of Waterloo can find ways to make such creative partnerships a reality.

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Implementation Plan

	Recommendations	Proposed Actions	Responsibility for Leading and Resourcing (if applicable) Follow-up	Timeline for addressing Recommendation
	Short Term Recommendations			
1.	We recommend that Sexuality, Marriage,	The Department fully supports this	SMF Department Chair	Completion: Two to three
	and Family Studies undertake a review of	recommendation. In fact, the Department	 Support from the SJU 	years, once additional hires
	its name, a concern that was brought up by	has been engaged in informal (and	VPAD (Vice President	have been completed and a
	nearly everyone. But we are not	formal) discussions about a name change	Academic and Dean),	Visioning/Strategic Planning
	recommending a wholescale change, as	since the previous review.	including financial	exercise has been
	most people mentioned a discomfort only		support for an external	undertaken.
	with the use of "marriage," but not	Once the department members who are	consultant, if needed.	
	"sexuality" or "family." As such, our	currently on sabbatical and medical leave		An update will be provided
	recommendation would be to pluralize	return*, SMF can resume concentrated		at the 2-year Progress
	sexuality and family, and find an additional	discussions about how to move forward		Review.
	word to better reflect the vastness of the	with a name-change.		
	relationships studied and considered in the			
	courses.	*One member has been on an extended		
		leave and is not expected to return.		
		One member returned from medical leave		
		in Winter 2020; their pre-tenure		
		sabbatical runs from January 2021 to June		
		2021.		
		Another member who had been cross-		
		appointed to SMF (40%) chose not to		
		renew their cross-appointment when it		
		expired in spring of 2020.		

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		Another member (DTA) is on a leave of		
		absence (from September 2020 to		
		present; expected return is fall 2022).		
2.	(Note: The name has been removed from this recommendation. No other changes to the reviewers' wording have been made). We recommend that []'s position be formalized so as to ensure the long-term stability of the program. This formal role should be at the Lecturer level or at the Assistant Professor level, in the latter case, where professional and clinical experience is recognized as being similar to the PhD qualification.	The Department strongly supports this recommendation and looks forward to working with the VPAD to realize this goal. The formalization of this position needs to align with the SJU Academic Staff Association (ASA) Collective Agreement (CA).	SJU VPAD SMF Department Chair SJU President (final approval)	The process should begin immediately so that, if possible, it can be in place before the end of the DTA's contract.
3.	(Note: Names have been removed from this recommendation. No other changes to the reviewers' wording have been made). We recommend that at least two new hires – 100% SMF – be added to the faculty complement (one could presumably organize this as 4 at 50% SMF). Over the past years, we note that many faculty members have left SMF, some for administration, others for different positions, others have renegotiated their contracts after hire, and another has	This recommendation is understood to be in addition to the one above (#2), as they are presented separately in the report. The Department is in full support of the recommendation to focus on stability in departmental resources by adding the equivalent of two new hires to the SMF faculty complement. SMF welcomes the flexibility the reviewers suggest in terms of how this 200% is organized (e.g., across 2-4 faculty members).	 SMF Department Chair SJU VPAD SJU President SJU HR 	Formal request for hires is to be submitted by the Department Chair to the VPAD and St. Jerome's President. The ideal timeline is to have the equivalent of two fulltime positions filled by the end of two years. SMF is open to creative solutions to meeting this goal.

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	been on extended medical leave. In total,			
	we estimate these losses at at least 200%,	The Department agrees that targeted		
	which is how we have arrived at a figure of	hires may not serve SMF well at this time.		
	two full-time hires.	Instead, SMF will focus on attracting and		
	a. We are also recommending that these	retaining faculty who are a good fit,		
	hires complement the existing faculty,	complement the SMF program (and its		
	rather than fill in perceived gaps in the	faculty), and can see themselves in the		
	program. While a targeted hire in the	program.		
	humanities would be nice, it may not			
	be the best approach given the	In the short-term, SMF looks forward to		
	direction and vision of the program.	working with the SJU administration		
	We would recommend a more holistic	(VPAD and President) to increase the		
	approach that hires in a "theme," for	faculty complement.		
	instance, "gender and aging," or			
	"gender, multiculturalism, and			
	transnationalism."			
4.	We recommend that the University in	The courses required for accreditation	SMF Department Chair	Over the next 2-3 years,
	conjunction with the Department	with the National Council on Family	(in consultation with	contingent upon increase in
	undertake discussions about certification	Relations (NCFR) for the Certified Family	Department members)	faculty complement.
	and certificate programs. We note in the	Life Educator (CFLE) certification have	SMF Administrative Staff	
	review, for instance, that the department is	been approved institutionally (SJU and	(for support)	
	short of one course to fulfill a certification	UWaterloo). SMF plans to initiate the	SJU VPAD (approval,	
	requirement. This should be resolved and	review and accreditation process with	financial)	
	addressed. Students and post-degree	that organization by the 2-year progress		
	students desire more formal certification	review.		
	recognition and this could contribute to the			
	growth of the program.			

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		The Department also has several ideas for		
		additional "certificates" that they believe		
		would be of interest to SMF graduates,		
		graduates from related programs, and		
		community partners in the human		
		services field. SMF will submit a proposal		
		to the SJU administration for certificate		
		courses/continuing education.		
5.	We recommend that SMF and the	The Department agrees that the SMF	An SMF Department	Short-term: Continue to
	University establish an "Ambassador's	students are an exceptional group and, as	member could take the	reach out to SMF students
	Program." We were thoroughly impressed	noted, the strongest advocates for SMF	lead on coordinating with	to volunteer at recruitment
	by all of the students we met, and they are,	both within the University and beyond.	the Director of Student	events.
	in many ways, the best advocates for SMF	What is difficult is how to make this	Affairs (SJU) and the SJU	Long-term: Consider a more
	because they are choosing to be there, they	recommendation (i.e., an "Ambassador's	Admissions and	formal "Ambassador's
	are excited about their work and studies.	Program") something that is student-	Recruitment Specialist	Program" as part of
	These students would go to High Schools or	driven rather than faculty-driven.	Involve senior SMF	Visioning exercise once
	Recruitment events.	,	students	faculty complement has
		Because recruitment initiatives are highly		been increased.
		regulated at the University of Waterloo		
		and reside within specific offices of the		
		University, SMF students are limited to		
		volunteering to participate in campus		
		Open Houses (e.g., March Break Open		
		House).		
		In the winter of 2020, students initiated		
		the formation of a formal SMF Student		
		die isimation of a formal sign stadent		

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		Society (through UWaterloo). We will continue to work closely with the Student Society regarding involvement in recruitment initiatives, departmental events, and some form of "Ambassador Program". SMF will also continue to explore other ways to channel students' enthusiasm and support for SMF as part of the future Visioning/Strategic Planning exercise.		
	Long Term Recommendations			
6.	We recommend that the University in conjunction with the Department begin to undertake discussions about a graduate program; however, this is, we stress, a long term goal once the faculty complement has been established. In our discussions with students, a meeting at which we ran out of chairs and had 20 students, 100% of them in our straw poll desired a graduate program in SMF and if afforded the opportunity would stay at St Jerome's for the graduate program. Moreover, we understand from discussions that a similar program at Guelph receives some 400 applications, and yet only 8 students are admitted. It seems to us that there is a	The SMF Department is very interested in pursuing one or more graduate programs in the future and agrees that this should be a long-term goal once the faculty complement has been established. Discussions of future directions in terms of graduate programs can be part of the Visioning/Strategic Planning exercise.	 SMF Department members (led by Department Chair) SJU Administration (VPAD, President) University of Waterloo Graduate Studies 	Planning may begin in three to five years, once departmental stability is achieved.

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7.	potential here to develop a Master of Arts in the long term, before the next review, and even thinking in the long long-term, perhaps a PhD program could be established, especially given how many people are turned down by Guelph. We do not see this as St. Jerome's University becoming a "second choice," but rather as offering something unique that fills a gap and a need. We would also recommend, with the development of a graduate program, that SMF may look outward and consider appointing "adjunct faculty," who are able to contribute to the teaching of the program and undertake some 'supervisory' roles in thesis courses.	Connected to the Short-term Recommendation #3, the Department is eager to build and/or deepen partnerships across Departments (and Faculties) at the University of Waterloo and beyond. This is an important area to explore when graduate programs in SMF are a real possibility. SMF looks forward to working with the VPAD to explore such possibilities in the future.	SMF Chair SJU Administration (VPAD and President) University of Waterloo Faculty Deans University of Waterloo Graduate Studies	Planning for adjunct or cross-appointments may begin within the next year or two; planning for graduate programs may begin in three to five years, once departmental stability is achieved.
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The Department Chair/Director, in consultation with the Dean of the Faculty shall be responsible for the Implementation Plan.

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Date of next program review	2024-2025		
	Date		
Signatures of Approval			
Jerres Kappin - orden	January 4, 2021		
Chair/Director	Date		
Cushia D. Vanin	January 18, 2021		
AFIW Administrative Dean/Head (For AFIW programs only)	Date		
Faculty Dean Note: AFIW programs fall under the Faculty of ARTS; however, the Dean cover staffing and administration of the program.	Date does not have fiscal control nor authority		
Dan De Vidi	June 16, 2020		
Associate Vice-President, Academic (For undergraduate and augmented programs)	Date		
Associate Vice-President, Graduate Studies and Postdoctoral Affair	s Date		

(For graduate and augmented programs)