

Final Assessment Report

Arts and Business (BA), Management Studies (Minor)

August 2025

Executive Summary

External reviewers were invited to review the Arts and Business (BA) and Management Studies (Minor) programs delivered by the Faculty of Arts.

“The Arts and Business (ARBUS) program is a somewhat unique offering that creates considerable value for Faculty of Arts students. The Dean of the Faculty of Arts noted his ambition to make the Faculty the home for business studies at the University of Waterloo. The ARBUS program has the potential to make this goal realizable. It is one of the largest programs within the Faculty of Arts, and it draws a large number of students to the Faculty and to the University. Arts students who take the program undoubtedly have more knowledge of business practices and have better skills in terms of beginning a career in business.”

A total of eight recommendations were provided by the reviewers, addressing three overarching areas: the changing and increasingly competitive marketplace, the program culture, and the faculty composition. 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 2026-2027.

Enrollment over the past three years

	ARBUS (BA) Honours	ARBUS (BA) – Honours Co-op	Management Studies (Minor)
2024-2025 (CURRENT YR)	281	1280	97
2023-2024 (LAST YR)	277	1349	74
2022-2023 (THREE YRS)	248	1373	86

*Based on Active Student extract from Quest on August 12, 2025.

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 Arts and Business (BA) and Management Studies (Minor) programs delivered by

the Faculty of Arts. A self-study (Volume I, II, III) was submitted to the Associate Vice-President, Academic on July 25, 2024. 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, Academic: Professor Peggy Cunningham, Faculty of Management, Dalhousie University; and Associate Professor Jay Handelman, Smith School of Business, Queen's University.

Reviewers appraised the self-study documentation and conducted a site visit to the University on September 30 – October 4, 2024. An internal reviewer from the University of Waterloo, Professor David McKinnon, Department of Pure Mathematics, was selected to accompany the external reviewers. The visit included interviews with the Associate Vice-President, Academic; Dean of the Faculty of Arts; Faculty Associate Dean of Undergraduate Studies; Director of the program, as well as faculty members, staff and current undergraduate students. The Review Team also had an opportunity to meet with representatives from the library, and Co-operative Education.

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

The Faculty of Arts offers Honours (four-year) Arts and Business Regular and Co-op programs. Students in the Arts and Business program, Regular or Co-op must choose one of the 29 majors that the Faculty of Arts offers. The approved text as it appears in the 2018/19 Calendar is below:

Arts and Business Co-op and Regular

Continuation in the Arts and Business academic plan requires a minimum cumulative average of 60%, a minimum cumulative average of 70% in Arts and Business courses, and a minimum cumulative honours major average of 70% (see Note 8) at the end of each academic term.

Eligibility for graduation in the Honours Arts and Business (co-op or regular) academic plan with an Arts honours major or in combination with Honours Liberal Studies includes successful completion of the following requirements:

1. Appropriate program-level requirements. See Bachelor of Arts Degree Requirements.
2. Arts and Business plan-level requirements:
 - a minimum cumulative Arts and Business average of 70%
 - seven academic course units (14 courses) in Arts and Business courses, including:
 - ARBUS 101/AFM 131, ARBUS 102/AFM 123, ARBUS 200, ARBUS 202/PHIL 215, ARBUS 300, ARBUS 301/AFM 333, ARBUS 302/MGMT 244, ARBUS 303/MGMT 345, ARBUS 400
 - ARTS 280 or a statistics course from the student's corresponding Arts major: ECON 221, PSCI 314, PSYCH 292, SDS 250R, SMF 230, SOC 280/LS 280 (see Note 9)
 - ECON 101
 - ENGL 210F (see Note 4)
 - SPCOM 204 (see Note 5)
 - one of HIST 113, HIST 243, PSCI 231
3. Appropriate plan-level requirements for the student's honours academic plan. See the specific Arts honours major or Honours Liberal Studies section of this Calendar.

Management Studies Minor

The Management Studies Minor is open to all students pursuing a degree, with the exception of students currently enrolled in or who have graduated from university business programs, plans or sub plans, including Waterloo "X and Business" programs. The minor includes 8 courses with a minimum cumulative average of 65%.

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

Strengths

- Students can pursue their interest and passion for a discipline in Arts and Humanities and combine it with strong and rigorous business education to become next-generation leaders or innovators. The Arts and Business program provides an alternative to a traditional business degree, in which the focus is narrower. In a traditional business program, the intent is that students gain a broad perspective of

business along with an in-depth understanding of core business areas such as accounting, marketing, and management. They often lack other disciplinary knowledge that is vital to success in rapidly changing business environments. On the other hand, the interdisciplinary approach of the Arts and Business program provides students with a deep understanding of a discipline upon which to connect their business knowledge.

- Arts and Business Students are able to apply their understanding of business theories and concepts and gain hands-on experience through repeated and relevant work experience, experiential learning, and coursework. Each dimension adds value to the overall education that a student receives while in the program.
- Arts and Business students can market themselves as different from other Arts graduates. They have the distinct advantage of having learned and acquired a combination of unique skills in communication, business, economics, marketing and accounting that are not comprehensively taught in an Arts major.
- The student body's diversity enriches and benefits everyone's learning experience in the Arts and Business program. Because Arts and Business students come from many different disciplines and backgrounds, each student can bring their perspective and skills to tackle business problems to achieve better outcomes. These diverse views and opinions can promote more discussion in class, allowing students to become more creative, tolerant, and innovative.

Challenges

- One of the biggest challenges of the Arts and Business program is how it can continue to differentiate itself from other similar programs being introduced and developed at other universities. Some universities are emulating the Arts and Business program (Trent University Business and Arts, for example). Still, significant differences remain between these new programs and the Arts and Business program, at least for now. Many new programs do not offer students an extensive co-operative experience and only allow students to combine a limited set of majors in Arts and Humanities with business. We expect more universities across Ontario to copy the Arts and Business program and develop similar programs in the near future as the approach to business education keeps evolving. As the universities compete for students in a market that will get more crowded over time, how does the Arts and Business program remain unique?

- The Arts and Business program is not part of a department and does not have a dedicated space on campus. Although Arts and Business students typically major in Economics, Legal Studies, Psychology and Speech Communications (over 65% of Arts and Business students are enrolled in these four majors), many are enrolled in one of the other 25 majors of the Faculty of Arts. This diversity is one of the strengths of the Faculty, but it also makes it hard for Arts and Business students to have a sense of belonging and community. Apart from the networking and some of the social events organized by the student Arts and Business Society, there is little sense of community for the students. We often hear this comment during our meetings with students and alumni. It is challenging to create a community when a program is not housed in a department, does not have a dedicated space on campus and includes students from many majors.
- Recruitment and retention of talented researchers and teachers are essential to a program's success. Not being part of a department or a school of business in the traditional sense has made it challenging to hire good instructors and faculty to teach business courses in the program. It has also been difficult to retain instructors. It is virtually impossible to compete with traditional business schools that can offer their faculty and lecturers a much higher starting salary. Moreover, because most of the Arts and Business program instructors are lecturers, very few faculty are engaged in business research. As a result, cutting-edge and frontier research in business is rarely discussed in upper-level classes.
- While the number of students in the Regular Arts and Business program is low compared to the Co-operative plan, the former remains an important part of the Arts and Business program. One of the challenges we face is that there may not be enough consistent experiential learning in the Regular program. Class sizes are an important hindrance to some forms of experiential learning, such as group work, presentations, and project-based learning. Thankfully, the EDGE program offered by the Centre for Work-Integrated Learning enables students who are in a non-co-operative program to access experiential learning through courses, volunteering and employment. Through this program, students can enhance their professional skills, explore career opportunities and gain insights in how to promote themselves.
- From a marketing perspective, the Arts and Business program is sometimes overlooked as students do not associate "business" with the University of Waterloo and the Faculty of Arts or believe Waterloo does not offer any business education. Moreover, explaining the Arts and Business program to potential students can be

difficult. Because the Arts and Business program is not a major and the University of Waterloo does not have a School of Business, some potential students do not understand what the Arts and Business program offers. Some students also see the Arts and Business program as too light on business compared to a traditional business program.

Weaknesses

- Currently, most of the Arts of the Business program's teaching needs are provided by departmental units in the Faculty of Arts. Although the program director and the academic advisors work closely with the head of these units to schedule courses, the Arts and Business program has very little input in the choice of instructors. Because these departments provide service teaching to the Arts and Business program, contract or upper-year lecturers are often hired to teach the required courses. The turnover can be high and, from a pedagogical perspective, disruptive to the students as this limits continuity in the program.
- Because the program requires only 14 courses in business, many of the business subjects are often only covered at an introductory level. Out of the 14 courses, 9 are at the 200 level or lower. Although labelled ARBUS 302, the first marketing course is cross-listed with MGMT 244, a second-year level course. If we count this course as a second-year course, then 10 of the 14 courses are at the introductory level. Because the program emphasizes broad rather than deep knowledge of business concepts and theories, students sometimes do not gain a level of knowledge that goes beyond basic concepts and definitions. Moreover, the limit of 14 courses means there is currently no room for some important foundational courses in business statistics, data analytics, organizational behaviour, and finance.
- Class sizes in the Arts and Business program are too large. In recent years, we have tried to cap the number of students per section for some courses to 60 (ARBUS 200, 300, 301, 302, 303 and 400, for example). Still, excluding the first-year courses where the section size is often over 200, there are several courses in the program with over 100 students per section. SPCOM 204, and PHIL 215, for example, have more than 100 students per section. The size of these sections is growing yearly, with no new sections being offered. With large class sizes, instructors can't run group projects effectively or allow live discussions and debates in class. These pedagogical tools are essential as they enable students to develop their communication and problem-solving skills. With small classes, it is also easier to share ideas with others and for instructors to help

- students. We need to offer the same kind of experience that students typically receive at Business schools, where instructors can engage with students or run small-group discussions while providing a more hands-on approach to projects and assignments.
- The Arts and Business program is not a good fit for students who want a traditional business education. Students who enter the program and expect to receive the same kind of education and training as in a Bachelor of Commerce or Management are more likely to leave the program.

Summary of Key Findings from the External Reviewers

Strengths:

- “The ARBUS program is a somewhat unique offering that offers considerable value to Faculty of Arts students. Arts students who take the program undoubtedly have more knowledge of business practices and have better skills in terms of beginning a career in business.”
- “With regard to their ARBUS classes, students noted that they like the practical, real-world experience they get (especially when the instructor has business experience), the use of case studies so they get to work on ‘real world’ business problems. They also enjoy working in groups.”
- “The co-op model (5 co-op work terms) versus 1-4 co-ops work terms in other programs gives ARBUS students an additional advantage because they have considerable work experience before entering the job market after graduation.”
- “The program Director, the support staff and student advisors are devoted to the program and its continued success.”
- “The three new teaching-track hires are excited to be part of the program and noted their passion for teaching the ARBUS students.”

Challenges and Weaknesses:

- “The program is somewhat out-of-date, and it lacks coverage of some core business subjects. Its curriculum needs to be evaluated and compared to that offered by the growing number of competitors in the market.”
- “While three teaching track faculty members have recently been hired to teach full-time within the program, there is considerable turnover of sessional instructors and lecturers in the majority of courses that comprise ARBUS. This creates challenges

when it comes to creating a culture of knowledge sharing, course consistency, course development and updates.”

- “Only limited resources have been allocated to the hiring of faculty to teach within the program or undertaking program improvement.”
- “Faculty members do not have programs of research related to business.”
- “Class sizes and delivery methods vary from year to year. The content of courses and the methods of course delivery vary as instructors change from year to year, and it appears some ARBUS courses are still taught online, something that should be avoided.”
- “There is little data collected and made available to support decision making with regard to program assessment and improvement.”
- “While there are more co-op work terms within this program than there are at other schools, many students do their work-terms within the University of Waterloo or other academic settings. As a result, they may not get the business experience students obtain in co-op programs at other universities and colleges.”
- “Students do not have a strong sense of belonging within the program.”
- “The Director has limited decision making authority or access to Faculty information.”

External Reviewers’ Recommendations and Program/Dean Responses

Recommendations to Address the Changing and Increasingly Competitive Marketplace

- 1. Curriculum Review:** It has been at least 7 years since the last curriculum review of the ARBUS program and even with that review, it appears that the general list of courses in the program has remained largely the same for decades. We recommend that every aspect of the ARBUS program be put up for a thorough curriculum review. The purpose of this review will be to ensure that the content of the program and the student experience is aligned with current and forthcoming academic and practitioner expectations of business programs; that program learning outcomes (PLOs) can be updated; accordingly, and that all courses and other program touchpoints, such as the CO-OP experience, are leading to students achieving these PLOs. Reviewers should assess whether having 14 courses is optimal for the program and examine ways in which missing core subject areas could be added (e.g., have more ½ courses and electives). We recommend that a curriculum review committee be comprised of internal (to UW) academics with expertise in Business education and pedagogy, external academics with expertise in Business education and pedagogy, as well as external industry experts.

Program Response

We have formed a curriculum review committee, which includes the ARBUS program director, two faculty members from Arts with experience teaching ARBUS courses, the Deputy Director of Student Experience in the School of Accounting and Finance, and two faculty members from Faculties outside of Arts who have experience in X&BUS programs at UWaterloo. We do not have the budget to invite individuals outside of UW but all members of the committee other than the Program Director have business-related experience or experience in pedagogy in the field of business.

The committee began reviewing the Arts and Business Program and Management Studies Minor in July 2025. The limit of 14 courses in ARBUS could be increased slightly since there are currently 5 courses in ARBUS that overlap with the Arts Breadth degree requirements (ECON 101/Social Science, COMMST 204/Fine Performing Communication Arts, ARBUS 102/Transdisciplinary, ENGL 210F/Humanities, ARBUS 202/PHIL 215/Humanities). If a student chooses a major that has no overlap with ARBUS, they would have to take 5 more Arts Breadths plus ARTS 160 and the 16 courses of their major which leads them to having space for up to 5 courses to get to 40. We could potentially increase the number of courses required for Arts & Business to make it 16 and make it equivalent to a major. In the short to medium term, the scope of the review will be to rethink the program under the constraint that new courses would have to be developed by individuals who are already at UWaterloo (i.e. without external hires) or would be courses that already exist in the X&BUS ecosystem at UWaterloo. This constraint will be relaxed once the budget situation has been rectified.

Including students partway through the process would be difficult at this point but we are engaging students separately from the ARBUS society and the ASU.

Dean's Response

The formation of the curriculum review committee, and the process that will result in curricular revision, are welcome developments for ARBUS. The X&BUS options at UWaterloo are all undergoing revision, as is the core curriculum for undergraduate programming in the School of Accounting. In this context we are confident that ARBUS can continue to serve the vital and unique function that it has to join traditional Arts majors with training and experience in business processes, environments, and futures.

- 2. Data Gathering to Support Better Decision Making and to Promote the ARBUS Program:** We recommend that the Faculty of Arts invest in a significant initiative in data gathering. The collection of accurate and timely data will help identify where the program is performing well or not well, thus guiding better decision making. In addition, the collection of timely market data can serve as a significant promotional tool to attract new generations of students to ARBUS. While the following list may not be comprehensive, we recommend that at a minimum, an effort should be made to collect the following data:

- Accurate profile of current ARBUS students (Student demographics; academic and work background of incoming students; reasons students choose ARBUS; competing Universities and/or program options that incoming students were considering instead of ARBUS; tracking how the profile of the ARBUS student may be changing over time)
- Track the ARBUS student experience throughout the program (retention rates, Co-op satisfaction, course satisfaction, student support satisfaction)
- Placement statistics of graduating students (in what positions/industries are they getting jobs; how long does it take to find employment; what are the starting salaries)

Program Response

Staff in the Arts Undergraduate Office have the skills, knowledge and experience to gather these data. The Program Director will help conceptualize what is needed. We will run these surveys every term in-house and review the data annually. For coop placement satisfaction, it could require help/input from Coop. There could be more rules around collecting post-graduation data since that would have to be through Alumni Affairs, and graduates have to provide consent to be contacted: we could end up with a biased sample in this latter case.

Dean's Response

We concur with the program response.

- 3. Invest in Enhancing Co-op Placement and Job Placement Opportunities:** ARBUS attracts students who desire a business-related application of their Arts interests. This is a key differentiator of the ARBUS program compared to a more focused Arts or Science student. The more the program can enhance business placement opportunities for students at the Co-op and graduation phases, the more attractive the ARBUS program will be for potential future students. Therefore, we recommend that the Faculty of Arts invest in dedicated staff support from professionals who have an expertise in finding placement opportunities in Business across a range of industries. We believe that the uniqueness of the ARBUS student (with their focus on the Arts but mixed with a solid Business foundation and interest) is highly attractive to Businesses across most industries. As but one example, there are a significant number of businesses in the Creative Industry sector in the Toronto area. A staff professional with the expertise to tap into this industry may create numerous placement opportunities for ARBUS students.

Program Response

This is outside the scope of the program's office. Students choose if they want to apply to coop roles that are related to their major or to the ARBUS portion of their program of study, therefore, in at least some of these cases, students "chose" their coop placement as one

related to their major rather than to the business portion of their program. The recommendation was nevertheless shared with the Coop office through their Faculty Relations Manager. She responded that in her experience, many coop employers in the creative industry are not-for-profit organizations with limited resources available to hire coop students. The current budget woes at Waterloo also prevent us and Co-operative and Experiential Education from hiring someone who could help students find these business-related roles in the creative industry. Perhaps, the recommendation as it was made can be revisited in the future. In the meantime, we will publish more stories about successful coop placements that are more geared towards the business portion of the degree of ARBUS students on websites promoting ARBUS such as <https://uwaterloo.ca/future-students/programs/arts-and-business#co-op> and in job lists in other promotional materials as we (the program's office) become aware of them.

Dean's Response

We concur with the program response.

- 4. Create an Advisory Board Comprising Business Professionals:** Providing ARBUS administrators and faculty with real-time insights into trends and changes happening in the business sector can be invaluable to ensure that the ongoing evolution of ARBUS remains aligned with business. An Advisory Board also helps to ensure that inertia does not become the hallmark of the program. As well, an Advisory Board helps to promote the ARBUS program to other important external stakeholders.

Therefore, we recommend the establishment of a Business Advisory Board comprised of Business leaders and successful ARBUS alumni. This Advisory Board may meet semi-annually, meetings that would include the Director of the ARBUS program and the Dean of the Faculty of Arts. One of the Advisory Board members would serve as the Chair, and help to drive the agenda of meetings in collaboration with the Director and Dean.

Depending on the agenda items, faculty members and students of ARBUS may be included in meetings as necessary. The Advisory Board may also be called upon for special initiatives such as fund raising, curriculum reviews, and other initiatives.

Program Response

There is no budget to have an advisory board given the current budgetary situation of the university. There are also problems related to having such an advisory board. An advisory board comprised of individuals who work in the business world might be motivated to shape the program into a "light" version of a business school education. Arts & Business could lose its unique appeal of matching a business education with an arts major as the emphasis might

be too much on business rather than arts. A board may have limited knowledge of academic goals and curriculum and may push for changes that are not compatible with the goals and aims of the Arts and Business program. Lastly, given the diversity of students in Arts, it would be challenging to find a diverse group of business people that would be relevant to Arts & Business and would represent a number of majors in the program.

Nevertheless, this is a recommendation that could be revisited once the institution's financial situation is rectified. If we are able to keep in touch with some of our most successful alumni through initiatives such as the one described in recommendation 1b) we could find individuals who would be well suited to this type of board, come from varied sectors and have some knowledge of what ARBUS is and what it could become. We can now start distributing e-survey to graduates. It is unlikely that the results of an e-survey could be meaningfully analyzed by the time the program is evaluated again (the process will start again in September 2026), but it could be done before the following evaluation.

Dean's Response

We concur with the program response.

Recommendations to Address the ARBUS Program Culture

5. **Within Faculty of Arts:** Currently, it appears that ARBUS is 'taken-for-granted' and largely ignored within the Faculty of Arts, despite the significant contribution the Program makes to the resources of the Faculty.
 - i. **Formally Place the Director of ARBUS on the Faculty of Arts General Group Committee:** Placing the ARBUS Director on the Faculty of Arts General Group Committee provides the Director with a direct line of communication and equal standing with Department Chairs. This is important since the Director depends on many Departments to provide faculty to teach in the program. This will also allow the Director to advocate for ARBUS, helping to raise the profile of this significant program within the faculty.

Program Response

Due to the recent reorganization in the Faculty of Arts, it has been decided that this would be revisited once there is a better sense of what will happen to the committee as its structure and membership will likely be altered in the coming months.

Dean's Response

The faculty of Arts has several interdisciplinary undergraduate plans that are not housed in departments (Liberal Studies, and Black Studies, for example). The Directors of these programs do not sit on General Group (now called Arts Academic Leadership). The re-organization of the faculty provides an opportunity to re-think the membership of AAL.

- ii. **Create a General Group ARBUS Subcommittee:** This Committee would comprise of the Dean of the Faculty of Arts, the Director of ARBUS, and the Chairs of Departments and Schools that have faculty members directly relevant for ARBUS. We fully understand the reluctance of any academic institution to want to add more committees to its portfolio. However, such a committee will provide an important governance mechanism for ARBUS, ensuring that a greater number of Departments and Schools within the Faculty of Arts have a direct interest and say in the functioning of the program. Such a mechanism will help to enhance the profile and importance of ARBUS within the Faculty of Arts.

Program Response

General Group (AAL) does not have subcommittees. Once the curriculum committee has completed its work, this recommendation will be revisited: it would make sense to have the curriculum committee morph into a program committee, similar to departmental undergraduate affairs committees. The composition of such a program committee would be influenced by the courses that would be part of it and the departments that are offering them. The chair of each department offering a course of ARBUS could have a seat on the committee or nominate a faculty member from their department to be part of it.

Dean's Response

We concur with the program's response.

6. Amongst ARBUS Students:

- i. **Creation of Physical Space Dedicated as an ARBUS 'Gathering Hub':** The creation of a common, dedicated space in which ARBUS students may consider their "home turf" would go a long way to increasing a sense of belonging in a community. This space may contain a common point within which to access student support services, house student club offices, and other common area touchpoints unique to ARBUS and Management Studies students.

Program Response

Space is limited in the faculty. The Arts & Business Society has an office (PAS 1293). This space is similar to what other student societies use. We will put efforts into trying to secure a better gathering space for students if one becomes available.

We have been holding in the past 18 months events every term to foster a sense of belonging. We aim to have one open to all students every term, as well as one geared towards younger students in the fall (first and second years) and one geared towards

graduating students in the Winter (as most of our students graduate in the June convocation). While it is not a substitute for a physical space where students can meet throughout the term, these help to build a sense of community in the short term. Generally, these involve making a craft and a free treat (e.g. beverages and snacks).

Dean's Response

We concur with the program's response.

- ii. **Case Competitions:** Case competitions are a very common and effective mechanism related to Business education that brings students together in a fun, engaging, competitive, and common experience. This could include internal competitions that stay fully within the ARBUS program; internal competitions that determine 'top ARBUS teams' that would then compete in external competitions against Business students from other Universities; or even the possibility of ARBUS hosting a case competition that may have an "Arts flavour" to it that attracts competitors from other Universities.

Program Response

One of the two teaching faculty members (teaching-stream, permanent-track) recently hired to support the ARBUS program has been tasked with this. He will find suitable case competitions our students can participate in and coach them. Once we have established such a program, we will consider whether participating in a major case competition (or a few smaller ones) can be used to replace a program requirement (for example, students could be given the choice between taking ARBUS 400 or participating in a "case competition course equivalent"). There is a precedent in the faculty for this: in economics, students who participated in the Bank of Canada's Governor Challenge did so for a course credit. The course was offered on a condensed but intensive schedule so that the team was ready in time for the early November competition. The curriculum review committee and/or the program committee will evaluate the feasibility of doing this and whether it is advisable.

Dean's Response

We concur with the program's response.

- iii. **Target ARBUS Students with a Clear Program Communication and Promotion:**
We encourage ARBUS to develop a clear plan of communication targeted to ARBUS students at every stage of the ARBUS student journey. This communication strategy would have two objectives:
 - a) Provide first year students and students joining ARBUS in second year with a 'Welcome to ARBUS' brochure they can use to familiarize themselves with the

- program.
- b) Ensure that all students at every stage of the program are clear on all program issues and support that are relevant to them at each program stage, such as, but not limited to, degree requirements, course selection, availability of academic advising, career counselling, and so on.
 - c) Provide a sense of community and excitement about being a part of the ARBUS program.

Program Response

At the entry point to the program, students will be provided a handout (virtual) listing resource, academic advisors, etc. An updated brochure could be handed out virtually in second year, including supports that are more relevant for second year and above students. These same brochures will be made available on the ARBUS landing webpage that lists program requirements, advising resources, etc. Conditional on getting funding to cover printing costs, we will provide physical handouts, especially at the time of the intake.

Dean's Response

We concur with the program's response.

Recommendations to Address the ARBUS Faculty Composition

- 7. Target 60% of ARBUS Course sections to be taught By ARBUS Dedicated Faculty:** The Association for Advanced Collegiate Schools of Business (AACSB) is an accreditation body that provides standards of acceptable practice for Business Schools. We fully understand that ARBUS is not a Business School. We are also not suggesting that ARBUS seek accreditation from AACSB. However, AACSB provides useful guidelines for ARBUS to consider as it seeks to enhance the quality of its program and secure its future in a changing and increasingly competitive marketplace.

In order to address the substantial “revolving door” problem surrounding the faculty assignment to ARBUS courses, we strongly recommend that the Faculty of Arts set a target of 60% of all ARBUS courses and course sections to be taught by faculty members who have at least some portion of their workload dedicated to the ARBUS program over a multi-year period. The 60% target represents a minimum AACSB standard. The Faculty of Arts may set a 5-year timeline within which to reach this objective. There are two paths from which the Faculty of Arts may draw in order to reach this objective:

Create new faculty lines dedicated to the ARBUS program. We do recognize that this is limited in that it is expensive to create these new faculty lines. And, importantly, it is difficult to attract research-oriented, tenure track faculty members to be solely dedicated to ARBUS.

While this pathway may be limited in terms of helping ARBUS reach the 60% goal, it does provide a useful pathway to help partially meet the goal. Some of our informants made the suggestion that the ARBUS program needs to mimic the School of Accounting and Finance where students pay higher fees, which enables qualified faculty to be paid higher salaries, and have a building devoted to the specialization. Following this path would also help to build a research culture within the program.

An alternative is to provide direction and incentive for current faculty members in business-related Departments and Schools with the Faculty of Arts to have some portion of their annual teaching and service load dedicated to ARBUS. For example, a current faculty member in the School of Accounting and Finance may have one of their course teaching requirements and one portion of their annual service requirements dedicated to ARBUS. In this way, that faculty member will become familiar with the program, care about its quality, and have service time available to dedicate to a curriculum review of ARBUS, for example. Achieving this goal of having current faculty members from business-related Departments and Schools have a portion of their workload dedicated to ARBUS may be facilitated by way of some of the recommendations we have made above (i.e. creating an ARBUS focused subcommittee from the General Group Committee, having the ARBUS Director sitting on the General Group Committee).

Program Response

Given the current hiring freeze at Waterloo, this is not possible in the short term. We have been told by at least one individual in the office of the Dean that the Arts & business program was on the priority list once the freeze is lifted. We cannot increase tuition fees for an existing program (beyond what the provincial government would allow us to do).

We will communicate the recommendation to have stable faculty members offer courses for ARBUS and perform service for ARBUS once the curriculum committee has determined whether the ARBUS curriculum should be changed and how. Once we have determined if any changes to the curriculum are required, we will communicate to departments who are offering courses for ARBUS that this recommendation was made. Given the current budgetary woes and the general direction across the faculty to hire no or very few sessionals, departments will have to rely more on their regular faculty members. Perhaps some of these individuals will enjoy teaching courses that are part of the ARBUS curriculum and will request to keep teaching for ARBUS once the budget is back on track.

Dean's Response

We concur with the program's response.

- 8. Limit On-Line Course Delivery:** Students were concerned about the number of courses offered online. They say such courses provide a weak learning environment. Work to ensure in-person class delivery for all courses.

Program Response

Given that developing online courses uses resources both in terms of time and in terms of money, we will limit the development of new online courses for the foreseeable future. We will continue to offer a limited series of online courses (both marketing courses, Microeconomics, which is offered to many non-ARBUS students by the economics department) and the curriculum committee will evaluate if some of the courses currently offered online will continue to be part of the ARBUS curriculum (e.g. ENGL 210F).

Dean's Response

We concur with the program's response.

Recommendations Not Selected for Implementation

The recommendations that will not be implemented are mainly due to budgetary limitations: we cannot hire faculty members due to the hiring freeze. The Director will not sit on General Group due to the current reorganization in Arts (but this will be revisited at a later date). Others are because there is no such structure at UW (General Group subcommittees) but will be modified and applied to the UWaterloo context (program committee instead). Lastly, some are outside of the scope of influence of the Director (e.g. coop).

Implementation Plan

	Recommendations	Proposed Actions	Responsibility for Leading and Resourcing (if applicable) the Actions	Timeline for addressing Recommendations
Recommendations to Address the Changing and Increasingly Competitive Marketplace				
1.	Curriculum Review	<p>A curriculum review committee will be formed. Its membership will be as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Director of the program • 2 Arts-based faculty members who teach in the ARBUS program • The Deputy Director of Student Experience (SAF) • 2 Faculty members who teach in other X&BUS program on campus 	Director of the program	The committee will held its first meeting during the Spring 2025 term. The work of the committee could take months, but hopefully less than a year.
2.	Data Gathering to Support Better Decision Making and to Promote the ARBUS Program	Kelli MacCulloch in the AUO has the skills, knowledge and experience to gather these data. The Director will help conceptualize what is needed.	AUO with the input of the Director of the program	This will be ongoing (we will update the data yearly and readjust our strategy) so there is no timeline.
3.	Invest in Enhancing Co-op Placement and Job Placement Opportunities	This is outside of the purview of the Arts & Business office. Students largely decide which coop placements they want to apply to and whether those placements are more in the business world or if they are more related to their majors. This recommendation nevertheless has been communicated to the Coop Faculty Liaison.	N/A or Coop	N/A
4.	Create an Advisory Board Comprised of Business Professionals	There is no budget to have an advisory board given the current budgetary situation of the university.	N/A	N/A

Recommendations to Address the ARBUS Program Culture				
5.	Within Faculty of Arts			
	i. Formally Place the Director of ARBUS on the Faculty of Arts General Group Committee.	Given the current reorganization in the Arts Faculty, this recommendation will be revisited at a latter date.	Director of the program	To be revisited in two years or so
	ii. Create a General Group ARBUS Subcommittee	These do not exist in Arts/at the University of Waterloo. An ARBUS program committee will be formed once the work of the curriculum review committee will be completed.	Director of the program	12 months. Dependent on timeline and conclusion of the curriculum review committee.
6.	Amongst ARBUS Students			
	i. Creation of Physical Space Dedicated as an ARBUS 'Gathering Hub'	The ARBUS student society currently has a space. We will determine over the next few months whether we can find a larger, more inviting space for students to use.	Kelli MacCulloch	12 months
	ii. Case Competitions	Students will be given the opportunity to participate in business case competitions. The curriculum review committee will evaluate if this will replace the requirement to take ARBUS 400 for those students and under what conditions .	Lead: One teaching stream faculty member from ARBUS Resources: Director of the program	Minimally 2-3 years, to get to a steady state in which we know when/how this can replace ARBUS 400.
	iii. Target ARBUS Students with a Clear Program Communication and Promotion	At the entry point to the program, students will be provided a handout (virtual) listing resources, academic advisors, etc. An updated brochure could be handed out virtually in second year, including supports that are more relevant for second year and above students.	ARBUS advising team	Fall 2025 for the first iteration. Handouts may be revised in further iterations.

Recommendations to Address ARBUS Faculty Composition				
7.	Target 60% of ARBUS Course sections to be Taught By ARBUS Dedicated Faculty	Given the current budgetary situation, this is not currently possible. When the budgetary situation is resolved, Arts & Business is on the priority list to hire within the Arts Faculty.	Director of the program	Within two years after the budgetary issues are resolved.
8.	Limit On-Line Course Delivery	Given that developing online courses uses resources both in terms of time and in terms of money, we will limit the development of new online courses for the foreseeable future. We will continue to offer a limited series of online courses (both marketing courses, Microeconomics) and the curriculum committee will evaluate if some of the courses currently offered online will continue to be part of the ARBUS curriculum (e.g. ENGL 210F).	N/A	N/A

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

Date of next program review

2026/2027

Date

Signatures of Approval



Please keep this document in Word version. We do require you to sign it or demonstrate your approval. If you have issues with signing a Word document, please confirm your approval by adding the following wording when you send back the document by email "I hereby approve the attached document." We will collect formal signatures at a later stage on a pdf version.

August 3, 2025

Chair/Director

Date

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

Date

September 2, 2025

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.



July 30, 2025

Associate Vice-President, Academic

Date

(For undergraduate and augmented programs)