

PROGRAM(S): THEATRE AND PERFORMANCE (BA, MINOR)

MARCH 2025

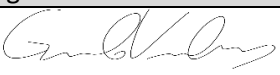


Program information: *completed by AQUE Office*

| | | | |
|-------------------------------|---|---------------------|------------------|
| Previous review period: | 2019-2020 | Next review period: | 2026-2027 |
| Final Assessment Report (FAR) | | | |
| Internal Approval Date: | 3/7/2023 | | |
| Link to FAR: | Final Assessment Report | | |

Signatures:



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| | Required | Signature | Date |
|----------------|-------------------------------------|--|-------------------------------|
| Chair/Director | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |  | 3/4/2025 |
| Dean | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |  | 4/14/2025 |
| AFIW Dean | <input type="checkbox"/> | | Click or tap to enter a date. |
| AVPA | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |  | 4/4/2025 |
| AVPGSPA | <input type="checkbox"/> | | Click or tap to enter a date. |

Enrollment (past three years): *completed by AQUE Office*

| | Honours* | Co-op* | Minor** |
|----------------------|----------|--------|---------|
| 2024-25 (CURRENT YR) | 26 | 12 | 2 |
| 2023-24 (LAST YR) | 35 | 12 | 3 |
| 2022-23 (LAST 2YRS) | 30 | 6 | 8 |

*Numbers gathered from Quest as of March 4, using the Fall term of each academic year.

**Based on Active Student Extract in Quest on March 6, 2025.

Initiatives/Developments since the Final Assessment Report

See details in Progress on Implementation Plan.

Progress update on Implementation Plan

Recommendation 1: The program should take steps to increase support for the Arts Co-op program option by:

- a. Investigating the feasibility of, and advocating for reconsideration of university parameters for, co-op placements to open opportunities for employers who are not-for-profit organizations and to allow placements that do not conform to current one-term time frames.
- b. Providing for a Co-op coordinator or liaison role within the Theatre and Performance program to foster placement relationships with local arts organizations.
- c. Adapting course offerings across multiple terms to accommodate co-op term rotations.

Completed: ☒Yes ☐No ☐Partially

Progress: The Theatre and Performance program at the University of Waterloo has undertaken significant steps to support the integration of co-op placements within the curriculum, acknowledging the challenges posed by the structural constraints of both the university's co-op framework and the broader professional theatre landscape.

Between 2020 and 2022, the program proactively engaged with the university's co-op office to advocate for the needs of theatre students, ensuring that existing structures could better accommodate the discipline's unique demands. While this early initiative resulted in tangible benefits for several students—allowing them to gain co-op experience with a focus on theatre training—the scarcity of viable placements remains a substantial impediment. The core challenges stem from three interrelated factors: (1) the financial limitations of theatre companies, particularly in the non-profit sector, which restrict their ability to participate in co-op placements; (2) the inflexibility of the co-op program's one-term structure, which conflicts with the seasonal and project-based nature of theatre production cycles; and (3) the geographic dispersal of potential placement opportunities across Ontario, making relocation infeasible for many students.

Recognizing the need for dedicated coordination efforts, the program has assigned Janelle Rainville to lead outreach efforts and foster collaborative relationships with theatre companies and arts organizations. In addition to Rainville's dedicated role, faculty and staff have actively leveraged their own professional networks to expand placement opportunities. Despite these efforts, the systemic constraints of the co-op framework continue to limit the scale of student participation in meaningful theatre-related placements.

Adapting the curriculum to support co-op term rotations has presented significant structural challenges, particularly given the rigidity of course scheduling within the Faculty of Arts. While

the program has not been able to modify course offerings across multiple terms to align with co-op placements, it has demonstrated flexibility by allowing students to complete required courses out of sequence. Specifically, adjustments have been made to the scheduling of THPERF 243 and 244, permitting students to progress through the program in a manner that accommodates their co-op commitments.

Next steps (if applicable): Moving forward, the Theatre and Performance program will continue efforts to expand industry partnerships, particularly by strengthening connections with key regional organizations such as Stratford Festival and Drayton Entertainment. Further engagement with the university's co-op office will be pursued to explore alternative placement models, including multi-term co-op opportunities and remote or project-based work.

Additional comments: N/A

Recommendation 2: The program should make curricular changes that *improve integration with the business side of the Arts + Business program* Option. Potential course offerings in arts management, producing, arts marketing, etc., would be steps towards this goal.

Completed: ☒Yes ☐No ☐Partially

Progress: The Theatre and Performance program has taken steps to enhance curricular integration with the business side of the Arts and Business program, recognizing the need to equip students with essential skills in arts management, producing, and marketing. While full integration remains a challenge, meaningful progress has been made through both formal coursework and experiential learning opportunities.

A key response to this recommendation has been the introduction of THPERF 248: Project Management in the Arts, a course specifically designed to introduce students to foundational principles of project management within creative industries. This course, which covers essential skills such as budgeting, communication, scheduling, leadership, problem-solving, and conflict resolution, provides a structured approach to arts management and aligns with broader industry practices in theatre, dance, film, and digital media production. The course also complements THPERF 343: Stage Management, which offers additional training in the logistical and organizational aspects of theatre production.

Beyond formal coursework, the program provides *informal training opportunities* through work-study placements, which often focus on publicity and marketing related to theatre productions. These placements give students hands-on experience in promoting live performances, developing marketing materials, and engaging with audiences—key skills that align with the business dimensions of the theatre industry. While these opportunities are valuable, they remain supplementary rather than fully integrated into the curricular structure.

Next steps (if applicable): Despite these advancements, deeper integration with the Arts and Business program has proven challenging. Moving forward, the program will explore ways to refine upper-year courses to provide a stronger business-oriented framework, equipping students with tools to market themselves effectively within the theatre industry. Additionally, potential outreach to the Arts and Business program will be considered to establish stronger collaboration and identify opportunities for shared curricular initiatives.

Additional comments: N/A

Recommendation 3: The program should, perhaps with the support of CTE, engage program stakeholders in a *curriculum mapping exercise that places production at the core* and considers how the program learning outcomes are realized through production. The “bundling” of not only practice-based learning outcomes but also learning outcomes pertaining to more academic aspects like theatre history, dramatic literature, dramaturgy and theory, in alignment with the creation of performance, would allow the program to fulfill its outcomes with a small cohort of students and reducing the need to offer many distinct courses.

Completed: ☐Yes ☐No ☒Partially

Progress: The Theatre and Performance program has made substantial progress in an extensive curriculum mapping effort and in strategic program development. These efforts have centered on refining the program’s pedagogical focus while critically engaging with theatre history, dramatic literature, dramaturgy, and theory in a manner that aligns with the program’s evolving identity and values.

A significant milestone in this process has been the program’s sustained collaboration with the Centre for Teaching Excellence (CTE), which has provided structured guidance through workshops and curriculum mapping exercises spanning Spring 2022, 2023, and 2024. As of Spring 2024, the curriculum has been fully mapped, and revisions to the core production course learning objectives are underway. This work has been instrumental in affirming the program’s identity as production-centered, structured around three pedagogical pillars:

1. Acting
2. Production and Design
3. Dramaturgy and Context

These pillars are embedded within a strong academic framework, drawing from theatre studies, theatre history, performance studies, fine arts, and communication studies. The program successfully balances practice-based training—which incorporates elements of conservatory-style production and design—with the broader intellectual foundation of a liberal arts education. This approach ensures that students develop both technical expertise and critical thinking skills, enabling them to engage with performance as an evolving social, historical, and political practice.

Additionally, this curriculum work has solidified three overarching strategic values that guide program development and pedagogy:

- Indigenization and Decolonization
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)
- Environmental Sustainability

The program has actively integrated faculty and staff voices into these revisions, ensuring that the perspectives of both new and existing faculty members shape the evolving curriculum.

Next steps (if applicable): The program is committed to completing the course-by-course curriculum mapping process and refining key course learning objectives in collaboration with CTE. Future areas of focus include:

- Re-envisioning the capstone course structure to align with the program's strategic goals.
- Strengthening the practice-based and production-centered identity of the program, ensuring that students receive a robust experiential learning experience.

Additional comments: The implementation of these two critical recommendations has taken longer than anticipated due to several structural and contextual challenges:

- The COVID-19 pandemic (2020-2022) significantly disrupted program development and faculty collaboration.
- Faculty retirements and leaves created gaps in continuity, particularly among those central to curriculum revision efforts.
- The addition of new faculty members required an adjustment period to onboard them and incorporate their voices into the evolving program identity.
- Departmental restructuring introduced curriculum committees but lacked clear operational guidance, slowing initial progress.
- Frequent leadership transitions, including interim and new Department Chairs with limited prior engagement in the program, impacted decision-making and strategic direction.
- The program's intensive yearly workflow, with Fall and Winter focused on production, relegated substantive curriculum work to Spring, while faculty research commitments halted activity in the Summer.

Recommendation 4: The program should *ensure that there are regular offerings of courses* and selection of performance texts that *address or "speak to" "canonical" repertoire* and increase student knowledge of "core" literary and socio-historical context in the field of theatre studies.

Completed: ☐ Yes ☐ No ☒ Partially

Progress: The program has critically examined its approach to *canonical theatre texts* and has developed a nuanced strategy to decolonize the curriculum while maintaining a rigorous engagement with theatre's historical and socio-cultural contexts. Key commitments include:

- Avoiding the use of the term ‘canon’ to move away from exclusionary Eurocentric frameworks.
- Contextualizing works from the Western canon within a critical, historical, and political framework.
- Critically investigating and adapting staged works from the Western canon to ensure they are reinterpreted in ways that challenge rather than reinforce structures of oppression.
- Prioritizing guest artists and directors from diverse backgrounds to bring fresh perspectives and critical engagement with canonical texts.

These initiatives were central to the discussions held at the Spring 2023 Faculty Retreat, where faculty deliberated on how best to integrate these values into course offerings and theatrical productions.

Next steps (if applicable): Continuing to stage productions that challenge assumptions and reinforce the program’s core values of decolonization, Indigenization, EDI, and environmental sustainability.

Additional comments: Same as above. See Recommendation 3.

Recommendation 5: The program should investigate options for and *consider the advantages of program staff assuming formal teaching roles* (in areas such as production skills, design, and production/design history) to take advantage of existing instructional expertise in the program and expand course offerings.

Completed: ☒Yes ☐No ☐Partially

Progress: The Theatre and Performance program has recognized the value of incorporating program staff into formal teaching roles, particularly in areas such as production skills, design, and production/design history. While implementation has been challenging due to low enrollment numbers, this remains a high-priority area for the Curriculum Committee as part of its broader revisions to production and design courses.

A significant step toward this goal has been the revision of THPERF 100: Introduction to Theatre, the program’s gateway course. This course introduces students to key processes in theatre creation, including textual analysis and conceptual development; design, rehearsal, and production methodologies; performance and audience engagement strategies; and critical self-evaluation and reflection

Recent revisions have emphasized equity in instruction and student learning experiences, ensuring that theatre-making is critically examined through lenses of race, gender, and sustainability. Previously, staff engagement in this course was limited to informal guest lectures, but a staff member will serve as the instructor of record for the first time in Winter 2025. This

marks a significant milestone in recognizing and formalizing the instructional expertise of program staff.

Next steps (if applicable): The successful integration of staff instruction into THPERF 100 serves as a pilot initiative, laying the groundwork for further expansion of formal teaching roles. Moving forward, the program will:

- Assess the impact of the revised THPERF 100 offering in Winter 2025, with a focus on student experience, instructional effectiveness, and equity in teaching roles.
- Explore additional opportunities for staff-led instruction in production and design courses, leveraging in-house expertise to enrich course offerings.
- Continue refining production and design curricula to ensure that staff contributions are integrated in a sustainable and pedagogically sound manner.

While structural constraints remain, the program is making measured but meaningful progress in recognizing the instructional contributions of program staff, ensuring a more equitable distribution of teaching responsibilities and an enriched learning experience for students.

CYCLICAL PROGRAM REVIEW PROGRESS REPORT



| | Recommendations | Proposed Actions | Responsibility for Leading and Resourcing (if applicable) the Actions | Timeline for addressing Recommendations |
|----|--|---|---|---|
| 1. | Increase support for the Arts Co-op. | Advocacy with Co-op office (continued); creation of program co-op liaison | Vay Young and Janelle Rainville | complete |
| 2. | Improve integration with the business side of the Arts + Business program. | Creation of Project Management in the Arts and Stage Management courses | Gerald Voorhees | complete |
| 3. | Curriculum mapping exercise that places production at the core. | Continued course mapping and revision | Paul Cegys and Vay Young | Fall 2025 |
| 4. | Ensure that there are regular offerings of courses and selection of performance texts that address or “speak to” “canonical” repertoire. | Critical reinterpretations of Eurocentric “canons” | Paul Cegys and Vay Young | ongoing |
| 5. | Consider the advantages of program staff assuming formal teaching roles. | Staff teaching on sessional basis | Janelle Rainville and Gerald Voorhees | ongoing |

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