

UNIVERSITY OF WINDSOR
CYCLICAL PROGRAM REVIEW (CPR)
FINAL ASSESSMENT REPORT AND IMPLEMENTATION PLAN: PHILOSOPHY
UNDERGRADUATE AND GRADUATE PROGRAMS
January 2026

Executive Summary of the Cyclical Program Review of the Department of Philosophy Programs

In accordance with the University's Institutional Quality Assurance Process (IQAP), this final assessment report provides a synthesis of the external review and the internal responses of the undergraduate and graduate programs in the Department of Philosophy.

In addition to identifying the strengths of the programs, together with opportunities for program improvement and enhancement, the report prioritizes the recommendations that have been selected for implementation and sets out a plan (including the agent(s) responsible for addressing the recommendations and deadline dates) for follow-through. Timelines for monitoring the implementation of the recommendations are built into the process, with areas reporting mid-cycle on their progress to the Senate Program Development Committee, or earlier where there are significant concerns requiring urgent follow-up.

The Department of Philosophy 2021-2022 Self-Study submitted to the Office of Quality Assurance on January 9, 2025, included 1) a summary of recommendations and actions from the last review; 2) descriptions and an analysis of the programs, their learning outcomes, curriculum structure, and student experience; 3) information on enrolments as well as financial, physical, and human resources; and 4) the program data including the standard data package provided by the Office of Quality Assurance. Included in the appendices to the Self-Study were faculty member CVs, the Leddy Library report, course descriptions, syllabi, curriculum map, student satisfaction surveys data.

The Department of Philosophy programs were reviewed by Dr. Shannon Hoff (Department of Philosophy, Memorial University of Newfoundland and Labrador), Dr. Michael Milde (Department of Philosophy, Western University) and Prof. Maggie Liddle (Faculty of Law, University of Windsor). In addition to assessing the Self-Study, the Review Team conducted a two-day on-site visit on February 6-7, 2025, which included meetings with faculty, students, administrative support staff, the Graduate Program Coordinator, the Head of the Department of Philosophy, the academic librarian, the Dean of FAHSS, the Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies, and the Associate Vice-President, Academic.

In their report (March 20, 2025), the Review Team confirmed that the undergraduate and graduate programs meet the IQAP evaluation criteria and are aligned with the University's mission, vision, and academic plans. However, it was noted that one specific aspect of the institution's mission to "foster positive change", though implicit, was not directly reflected in the Department's own mission statement. Admissions requirements and program requirements are clear, appropriate, and aligned with degree-level expectations. The Review Team noted that the undergraduate program structure offers sufficient flexibility, that the modes of content delivery are diverse and engaging, and that the graduate program is rigorous in offering course-based, major project and thesis options which are all standard ways to develop experience in research and critical analysis. The Reviewers also noted that the Department is well able to monitor and assess the overall quality of the programs, and whether students are achieving learning outcomes.

The Review Team noted that the programs are delivered by faculty with solid research profiles, who utilize engaging and innovative teaching methods and remain dedicated to providing an exceptional graduate and undergraduate student experience. The Reviewers repeatedly noted that "the Department enjoys a very collegial community". This was supported by feedback from students who also emphasized a collegial and active teaching and learning community.

The Review Team noted that while the current faculty complement is sufficient to offer its current suite of programming, with the loss of four faculty members since the last review period and potential upcoming retirements in the near future, the quality and sustainability of the programs in their current form is at risk. The Review Team noted that “[w]ithout a commitment to hiring of some replacements in the event of a further reduction in the current complement, the Department must prepare to wind down some parts of its current program offerings. It will also have to explore other options, including partnering with other units in the Faculty of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences or in other parts of the University.” A holistic curriculum review and redesign is needed to ensure that the Department can continue to offer undergraduate and graduate programs that align with a faculty complement and expertise reflective of anticipated retirements and future enrolments.

The Head of the Department of Philosophy and the Dean of the Faculty of Art, Humanities, and Social Sciences submitted their responses to the External Reviewers’ Report (June 13, 2025 and July 18, 2025, respectively), addressing the recommendations, identifying follow-up actions, and providing clarification or corrections, as appropriate. The Senate Program Development Committee (PDC) Final Assessment Report and Implementation Plan (January 2026) considered all the above documentation. The Executive Summary and Implementation Plan, along with any response from the area on the final recommendations, were submitted to Senate in February 2026.

Final Recommendations and Implementation Plan (in priority order)

Final recommendations were arrived at by the Program Development Committee, following a review and assessment of the External Reviewers report and the response from the Dean of the Faculty

Recommendation 1: That, as part of its holistic undergraduate curriculum review and redesign exercise, the Department consider:

- a) renaming courses of general interest to better attract non-majors and particularly majors outside of FAHSS, as well as consider proposing new courses that could appeal to non-majors, such as a course on AI Ethics. [Statistics show that students regularly change majors, especially if they discover the appeal of a discipline they had not previously experienced.] [ER Recommendation 2.]
- b) the possibility of further cross-listing of Indigenous and feminist philosophy with courses in other departments. [ER Recommendation 7.]
- c) including content related to underrepresented perspectives in its courses, if it has not already done so, and continue efforts to ensure that teaching styles and classrooms are inclusive and welcoming of non-traditional philosophy students. [ER Recommendation 7.]

Agents: Head, Department Council, faculty members

Completion by: Fall 2027

Recommendation 2: That the Department review the viability of its MA program given the intensive demands on its resources and the significant reduction in faculty complement, with specific consideration being given to the following revisions:

- a) Consider dropping the course-intensive “coursework” option for the MA;
- b) Identify courses in other departments that could count toward the MA degree (and flag its own courses as options for other departments in turn);
- c) Discuss the general idea of greater collaboration with other departments and programs.

[ER Recommendation 4.]

Agents: Head, Department Council

Completion by: Fall 2027

Recommendation 3: That the Department report on efforts to assign tenured professors to more 1000- and 2000-level courses, since such a strategy may help to attract majors. [ER Recommendation 3.]

Agents: Head, faculty members

Completion by: Fall 2027

Recommendation 4: That faculty members make every effort to apply for Tri-Council funds to support research (including grants that support varieties of activities beyond carrying out a research project, such as knowledge mobilization and partnership development grants) and that the Department report on the outcome of these efforts. [Grants would boost the Departmental profile, expand research possibilities and provide support for graduate students.] [ER Recommendation 5.]

Agents: Head, faculty members

Completion by: Fall 2027

Recommendation 5: That the Department report on efforts to pursue potential collaborations with other AAUs; a step which might help address the faculty gender and diversity imbalance. [ER Recommendation 6.]

Agents: Head, Dean of FAHSS

Completion by: Fall 2027

Recommendation 6: That the Department consider better harmonizing its mission statement with that of the University by adding the aim of equipping students for positive change. [In fostering development in students of a greater capacity to understand themselves and the world around them, Philosophy equips them for meaningful engagement with and transformation of their conditions.] [ER Recommendation 8.]

Agents: Head, Department Council

Completion by: Fall 2027