

YORK UNIVERSITY

Final Assessment Report – Executive Summary

Art History (BA, BA Honours)

Visual Art (BFA)

Art History and Visual Culture (MA and PhD)

Visual Art (MFA and PhD)

School of Arts, Media, Performance and Design

Cyclical Program Review – 2011 to 2019

This Final Assessment Report (FAR) provides a synthesis of the cyclical review of the programs listed below.

Program(s) Reviewed:

Art History - BA (includes minor)
Visual Arts - BFA (includes minor)
Art History - MA
Art History & Visual Culture – PhD
Visual Arts –MFA, PhD,
Combined MBA/MA/MFA) (Schulich and Art History/Visual Art)
Graduate Diploma in Curatorial Studies in Visual Culture

Reviewers appointed by the Vice-Provost Academic:

- Dr. Patrick Mahon, Department of Visual Arts, School for Advanced Studies in the Arts and Humanities, Western University
- Dr. Johanne Sloan, Department of Art History, Faculty of Fine Arts, Concordia University
- Dr. Marlis Schweitzer, Department of Theatre, York University

Cyclical Program Review Key Milestones:

Cyclical Program Review launch: September 2018
Self-study submitted to Vice-Provost Academic: Draft on Aug15/ Final on Sept 23, 2019
Date of the Site Visit: December 2-3, 2019
Review Report received: February 4, 2020
Program Response received: March 31, 2020
Dean's Response received:

Implementation Plan and FAR confirmed by Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance, May 2020

Submitted by Alice Pitt, Vice-Provost Academic, York University



This review was conducted under the York University Quality Assurance Protocol, August 2013.

SITE VISIT: December 2-3, 2019

The reviewers met with the following individuals, Alice Pitt, Vice Provost Academic; Thomas Loebel, Dean of the Faculty of Graduate Studies; Sarah Bay Cheng, Dean; Mike Zryd, Chair of Graduate Program Directors for AMPD; Sarah Parsons, Chair of Visual Arts and Art History (VAAH) and the department's two Graduate Program Directors: Barbara Balfour (Visual Arts) and Anna Hudson (Art History). Meetings were held with the full-time Studio faculty and with full-time Art History faculty, as well as with York University librarians. The reviewers toured the studio and workshop facilities with Visual Art faculty members David Armstrong and Brandon Vickerd as well as Facilities Manager Terry Wright. The reviewers met with a group of undergraduate students, a group of graduate students and with the staff in the department.

OUTCOME:

The Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance received the Program and Decanal responses to the recommendations and has approved an implementation plan.

A report on the progress of the initiatives undertaken in response to recommendations in general and as specified in the implementation plan will be provided in the Follow-up Report which will be due 18 months (December 2021) after the review of this report by the York University Joint Sub-Committee on Quality Assurance.

The next Cyclical Program Review will begin in the Fall of 2026 with a site visit expected in the Fall of 2027 or Winter of 2028.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION AND STRENGTHS:

The Department of Visual Art and Art History offers direct entry into a BFA in Visual Art and a BA Honours in Art History. The core program in VAAH is the BFA (founded 1969). In the 1990s the BA (90 credits) was introduced in order to provide a way for students to graduate even if they could not complete the full BFA. Although art history has always been a significant component of the department and studies courses were and are still a substantial requirement in the BFA, the BA in Art History was established in 2002. At the graduate level, the department offers an MA and PhD in Art History and Visual Culture and an MFA and PhD in Visual Art. The PhD was launched in 2008. In 1999, the combined option for MA/MFA/MBA was established. Students may also pursue the Graduate Diploma in Curatorial Studies in Visual Culture (2003).

The reviewers' overall assessment of the Department is, "that it is a vibrant pedagogical environment and that the programs provide students with the creative and intellectual foundation they need to flourish as individuals, and to succeed in their careers."

The reviewers made the following observation about the art history programs:

The Department has developed and sustained a strong undergraduate art history program, in spite of faculty retirements on the one hand, and diminishing enrolment on the other. The emphasis on Modern and Contemporary Art is has proved to be a

successful strategy, and this area of concentration will be enhanced by the curatorial stream currently being worked out.

About the graduate programs, they said this, “Grad students in Art History are fortunate to be able to work with excellent scholars, and the evidence suggests that they receive solid training, and good mentorship.”

About the studio programs, the reviewer noted:

Students at all levels are fortunate to be working within Studio programs being led by artistically and intellectually dedicated and highly capable faculty. The quality of research activity at York being generated by both faculty and students is impressive. In recent years the program has generally maintained a character of rigour even in the face of some significant faculty reductions, enrolment challenges, and other demanding changes. Recent hires are a promising indicator of the commitment of the University to the program.

The reviewers made recommendations that are intended to identify specific problems or gaps, in order to help strengthen the existing programs, and to ensure that student experiences remain positive. Regarding the graduate art history programs, they said, “Student experience could be strengthened, however, while the redistribution of supervisory responsibilities amongst all faculty members would alleviate what is currently an unsustainable situation.” For the studio programs, the reviewers indicated, “the discussions around further renewal and innovation that are reflected throughout this document are important and must be acted upon to ensure the sustained strength of the studio area.”

The recommendations are described in the Implementation Plan and the actions associated with each have been informed by responses from the program and the Dean of the School of Arts, Media, Performance and Design. The recommendations are numbered sequentially, but are organized by program as follows:

Art History (BA) 1-6
Art History and Visual Culture (MA, PhD) 7-12
Visual Art (BFA) 13-15
Visual Art (MFA/PHD) 16-25
All studio programs 26,27

IMPLEMENTATION PLAN

The chart below lays out the implementation plan approved by the Joint Sub-Committee at its meeting in June 2020.

	Recommendation	Action	Responsible for Follow-up	Timeline
	FOR BA ART HISTORY			
1.	That the Department continue to request a Tenure-track Indigenous position from the university.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Connect with the Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change (EUC) to support future collaborations (Summer 2020) 2. Propose cluster hire (June 2020) 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. VAAH Dept. Chair in consultation with ADA 2. Dean 	Complete by September 2020. Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month Follow-up Report due in December 2021.
2.	That the Department continue to augment their course offerings related to diversity and non-Western areas of research.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cluster hire recommendation 2. Inter-departmental facilitation 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cluster hire: Dean's Office in consultation with Provost 2. Inter-faculty facilitation: ADA, Dean in collaboration with department chairs 	Activity through remainder of 2020. Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month Follow-up Report due in December 2021.
3.	That an undergraduate, upper-level methodology course be introduced.	Develop a distinct methodology course.	Department, Associate Dean Academic	Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month Follow-up Report due in December 2021.
4.	That the relationship between the Public History Certificate and the curatorial stream under	1. VAAH to forward the necessary language to AMPD communications	1. VAAH Department Chair	Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month Follow-up Report due in December 2021.

	development be clearly described.	2. Revise website with additional information	2. Asst. Dean – Strategic Communications and Recruitment (SCR)	
5.	That the potential for collaboration with Visual Art faculty and students with students from both the BA and BFA programs be explored.	Dean to follow-up with Department on progress in the School’s annual review.	Associate Dean Academic, Dean	Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month Follow-up Report due in December 2021.
6.	That advising be assessed and improved.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Create online forms for necessary advising forms, wherever possible; Department can prioritize these to Asst. Dean SCR. 2. Follow-up with VAAH faculty advisors and Director of Student Engagement for consistency and coordination of advising; including awareness of the Civitas-Inspire tool, which supports advising appointments, records and referrals; 3. Post program pathways on Department website as part of website revision; 4. Follow up on VAAH advising program, year 1 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Director of Student Engagement in consultation with Department Chair 2. Director of Student Engagement, ADA 3. Asst Dean SCR 4. ADA, Dean 	Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month Follow-up Report due in December 2021.

	FOR MA, PHD ART HISTORY AND VISUAL CULTURE			
7.	That a rotation of graduate classes be considered so as to avoid repetition within a two-year cycle.	<p>Continue careful rotation of courses to ensure required two-third minimum of graduate only courses, and also the:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation of Pan-AMPD <i>Theoretical Issues</i> courses 2. Creation of VAAH degree handbook 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GPD in Art History in consultation with Department Chair, AMPD Chairs, Grad Council, ADR & AAPPC 2. GPDs in consultation with Department Chair, ADR 	Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month Follow-up Report due in December 2021.
8.	That PhD students be actively encouraged and enabled to register for doctoral courses across AMPD	Review enrolments across AMPD as part of School's annual review with Chair.	GPD Art History	Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month Follow-up Report due in December 2021.
9.	That the graduate supervision assignments be reviewed.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Department to review and revise research release criteria 2. Department to submit process for assigning graduate supervision, including proposals for equalizing workload 3. Review in annual meeting with Chair and GPD 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Department Chair 2. GPD in consultation with Chair 3. Dean 	Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month Follow-up Report due in December 2021.

10.	That doctoral students be provided with a clear set of degree progress milestones that are enforced.	As recommended, Department and GPDs to create doctoral handbook by fall 2020. Follow up in the School's annual review.	Departmental Graduate Program Directors, ADR	Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month Follow-up Report due in December 2021.
11.	That the outcomes of the Summer Institute (SI) be shared an example of successful studies/practice exchange.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Share information and highlights from SI with Knowledge Mobilization Unit and Asst. Dean SCR 2. Follow up in the School's annual review 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GPDs should hold key responsibility with support from Chair and SI instructors 2. Asst. Dean SCR 	Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month Follow-up Report due in December 2021.
12.	That the Department allocate space for the use of Art History graduate students.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Allocate temporary space for 2020/21 academic year 2. Undertake space plan for AMPD 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. GPDs and Chair in conversation with Dean's Office 2. Head of Facilities in conversation with all department chairs 3. Department chairs 4. Dean 	Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month Follow-up Report due in December 2021.
FOR THE BFA PROGRAM				
13.	That promotion of BFA is targeted to opportune constituencies.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Review recruitment strategy with department chair and area head 2. Draft language for outreach campaign and marketing 3. Include as part of targeted outreach in planned media campaign 	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chair, area head, Dean, Asst. Dean SCR 2. Chair, area head, Dean 3. Dean & Asst. Dean SCR 	Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month Follow-up Report due in December 2021.

14.	That the undergraduate BFA program consider thematization and interdisciplinarity at other levels besides First Year.	AMPD to announce faculty wide theme in June 2020. As specific plans develop, these should be shared and circulated among departments and the broader Faculty and University community.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Dean's office; department chairs, Asst. Dean SCR 2. Department chairs, Asst. Dean - SCR 	Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month Follow-up Report due in December 2021.
15.	That Moodle be used consistently across all Studio courses and that workload for Foundation course is manageable for students while setting high expectations, including regarding work ethic.	Continue to encourage use of Moodle. Department to pursue proposed Fall 2020 team for studio course.	Department Chair with appropriate departmental colleagues; review with the Dean	Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month Follow-up Report due in December 2021.
	FOR GRADUATE STUDIO PROGRAMS (MFA, PHD)			
16.	That the MFA Supervision scheme be reviewed to ensure optimal availability of Studio faculty and integration with student schedules.	Review supervision roster annual with mid-year check in with students to ensure timely progression. Report to Dean in the School's annual review.	GPD, Chair, Dean	Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month Follow-up Report due in December 2021.
17.	That PhD Supervision and Teaching be reviewed to ensure optimal availability of VA faculty and other AMPD faculty.	Revise admissions process so that incoming PhD students have a dedicated and assigned supervisor at the start of their program.	GPD and graduate faculty in VA PhD in consultation with Dept. Chair Dean	Implementation for Fall 2021 incoming class. Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month

				Follow-up Report due in December 2021.
18.	That end-of-term public critiques be held with guest critics for MFA students.	This activity already in place.	n/a	n/a
19.	That PhD milestones for visual arts students are clearly articulated.	Ensure status of student progress is discussed with GPD. Earlier supervisor assignment (see recommendation 17) should help. Departmental review of recommendations to be completed by May 2021.	GPD, ADR in consultation with Dept Chair	Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month Follow-up Report due in December 2021.
20.	That there be clarity about whether Research-Creation is a requirement.	Program already defined as a practice-based program. No further action required.	n/a	n/a
21.	That there be consideration for substitutions for MFA/PhD-VA cross-listed courses.	See recommendation 17.	See recommendation 17.	See recommendation 17.
22.	That a discussion about transcripts for award recipients be undertaken.	Review related communications in department and with FGS to ensure clarity with follow up at School's annual review.	GPD, Dept Chair; annual review with Dean by August 2020.	Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month Follow-up Report due in December 2021.

23.	That the program consider reducing the number of MFA Committee members to 3 to foster more intensive contact.	The recommendation is consistent with present practice.	n/a	n/a
24.	That the program establish mechanisms/curriculum to enhance research-focused integration opportunities for Art History and Studio students.	Department to consider recommendations in detail and implementation options. Discuss with Dean at School's annual review.	GPDs and Dept. Chair; consultation with Dean	Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month Follow-up Report due in December 2021.
25.	That the graduate supervisory role of Teaching-Stream faculty is clear and understood Departmentally.	Establish supervision guidelines and include in supervision handbook. For discussion in School's annual review.	Dept. Chair, GPDs, ADA	Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month Follow-up Report due in December 2021.
	FOR ALL STUDIO PROGRAMS			
26.	That consideration be given for a "cross-over" hire in Curatorial Practice, linking Art History & Studio.	Recommendation not accepted at this time. Hiring to be focused in priority areas noted in recommendations 1 and 2.	n/a	n/a
27.	That Media Art is covered by VAAH faculty, or through a collaborative arrangement within AMPD.	New Media Art course to be offered in 2020/2021; discussion about collaborating on courses is ongoing.	VAAH Dept. Chair in consultation with relevant chairs, ADA, and Dean	Report on outcomes of actions in the 18-month Follow-up Report due in December 2021.

--	--	--	--	--