



## Four Year Report (2021)

### English Language and Literature Graduate and Undergraduate Programs (reviewed 2016/17)

#### A. Summary of Review

This review was conducted under the terms and conditions of the IQAP approved by Senate on May 25, 2016.

1. The academic programs offered by the Department of English Language and Literature which were examined as part of the review were:

- BA in English and Contemporary Culture
- BA in English and Creative Writing
- BA in English Language and Literature
- BA with Major in English and Writing, Rhetoric and Discourse Studies
- BA-BED in English Language and Literature
- Certificate in Rhetoric and Professional Writing
- Minor in English Language and Literature
- Minor in Writing, Rhetoric and Discourse Studies
- MA in English

2. The Review Committee consisted of two external reviewers: Susan Hamilton (University of Alberta) and Eleanor Ty (Wilfrid Laurier University) and an internal reviewer, Sarah Matheson (Brock University).
3. The site visit occurred on January 25-27, 2017.
4. The Final Assessment Report was approved by Senate on October 4, 2017.

5. The reviewers assigned the programs the following outcome categories:

Program (s)	Excellent Quality	Good Quality	Good Quality with Concerns	Non-Viable
BA in English and Contemporary Culture			X	
BA in English and Creative Writing		X (New Program)		
BA in English Language and Literature		x		
BA with Major in English and Writing, Rhetoric and Discourse Studies*		X (New Program)*		
BA-BED in English Language and Literature		X		
Certificate in Rhetoric and Professional Writing		X		
Minor in English Language and Literature		X		
Minor in Writing, Rhetoric and Discourse Studies		X		
MA in English		X		

\*Note - The BA with Major in English and Writing, Rhetoric and Discourse Studies was modified into a BA (Honours) in English and Writing, Rhetoric and Discourse Studies as the result of the approval of a Request for Major Modification by Senate on September 16, 2015. The BA with Major was subsequently discontinued through a Request for Program Discontinuation that was approved by Senate on October 7, 2015. Although the BA (Honours) was not part of this review, the Reviewers have conflated the old and new programs and given the program an outcome category.

6. The next review of the undergraduate programs in the Department of English Language and Literature will be in 2024/25.

## B. Recommendations

### Recommendation #1

To hire additional support staff for the Graduate program.

#### ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be worthy of consideration but outside of the jurisdiction of the Committee. It is expected that the program will proceed through normal channels of advocacy for these administrative support resources.

#### Implementation Plan

Recommendation not accepted.

### Recommendation #2

To eliminate the BA in English and Contemporary Culture.

#### ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC understands that discussions are underway within the Department to consider the discontinuation of the program. The Committee considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

#### Implementation Plan (1<sup>st</sup> Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2017/18

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 Hold official Departmental vote on the question of eliminating the ECUL program	2017	2018
Action #2 Submit Discontinuation of Program form for Decanal comment	2017	2018
Action #3 Submit completed Discontinuation of Program form to ARC	2017	2018

**Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:**

ECUL Program Discontinuation was approved by Senate in spring 2018.

**Recommendation #3**

Diversify and enlarge the MA application stream by exploring options for additional for-credit experiences within MA, eg. Internships and/or experiential learning with local arts and community groups; curatorial collaborations with Special collections.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Department is encouraged to work with the Faculty of Humanities Coordinator for Career, Co-op and Experiential Education to address this recommendation.

**Implementation Plan (1<sup>st</sup> Priority)**

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2017/18

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 Increase active recruitment efforts by directly contacting GPDs around the country	2017	Ongoing
Action #2 Continue Departmental discussions about ways to offer experiential learning at the MA level while still maintaining the fundamental integrity of a program that is operating well as it stands	2017	Ongoing

**Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:**

We continue with a variety of active recruiting efforts, and it seems to be paying off: we have held steady at our target intake number in almost every year since the review. We have been particularly pleased to see a significant increase in the number of serious and eligible international applications; if that trend continues, we hope that those international students who join us at Brock will serve as ambassadors for our program in the years ahead and help us to grow our applicant pool. A new GPD took over administration of the program as of July 2020; the Chair and out-going GPD continue to consult with them about how to continue and expand these efforts—particularly in the midst of the ongoing global pandemic.

**Recommendation #4**

Consider offering Creative Writing at the Grad level.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted for consideration by the Department. The Committee expects that the availability and allocation of resources required for the implementation of the recommendation will be included in this consideration.

**Implementation Plan (1<sup>st</sup> Priority)**

Responsible for approving: Department  
 Responsible for resources: Department  
 Responsible for implementation: Department  
 Timeline: Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2017/18

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 Continue Departmental discussion about the possibility of a creative MRP option within the framework of our existing program requirements	2017	Ongoing
Action #2 ENCW Committee will prepare a draft proposal for consideration for 2018-19 when all members of that committee have returned from academic leave	2017	Ongoing

**Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:**

The Department approved some (minor) revisions to the language of our Graduate Procedures to allow for creative MRP projects, and while we have yet to have a student exercise that option, we believe it serves as an attractive option for some of our own ENCW undergrads considering their post-degree options. We are still somewhat hesitant to advertise this option too heavily, however, since we are conscious that at our current staffing levels (there are only 2.5 faculty members connected to the Creative Writing program to serve both graduate and undergraduate needs) our capacity to effectively supervise creative MRPs or theses remains very limited. The long-term goal is still to offer and more aggressively advertise more robust creative options at the grad level, including possibly offering creative writing courses; however, it is our position that further development in this direction is not yet possible. Nevertheless, we continue to pursue a number of initiatives—including the possibility of a Writer-in-Residence—that may help us to revisit this position in the coming years.

**Recommendation #5**

To be pro-active in incorporating experiential learning at the Undergraduate and Graduate levels.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted. The Committee encourages the Department to work with the Faculty of Humanities Coordinator for Career, Co-op and Experiential Education to address this recommendation.

**Implementation Plan (1<sup>st</sup> Priority)**

Responsible for approving: Department  
 Responsible for resources: Department  
 Responsible for implementation: Department  
 Timeline: Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2017/18

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 Assess opportunities for experiential learning already integrated as part of existing (especially WRDS) courses	2017	2018
Action #2 Meet with Faculty of Humanities Coordinator for Career, Co-op and Experiential Education during the summer of 2018 to discuss possible options	2018	2019
Action #3 Chair to prepare working draft proposal for possible experiential learning opportunities for Departmental consideration as on-going business for 2018-19	2018	Ongoing

**Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:**

We continue to discuss various experiential learning options, and several instructors have revised their existing syllabi to make it clear that their courses always offered substantial experiential opportunities. We recognize that in our discipline many of the things we often do in a number of our “regular classes”—encouraging and often requiring students to make presentations and lead seminar discussions; holding public reading events in various venues; livestreaming with authors, scholars, and publishers, etc.—provide valuable, discipline-specific, experiential opportunities. The Chair hasn’t yet officially met with the FOH Co-op Coordinator (Action #2) one-on-one, though there have been a number of informal conversations about how to properly account for and advertise experiential opportunities in

our existing courses with the Coordinator as part of regular Chairs and Directors meetings. We remain, as a unit, interested in considering more formal options, such as Co-op, but we have chosen to proceed with caution and carefully consider how such options would enhance our existing strengths and not prove a drain on resources—including the already stretched time and energy of our core faculty. This topic has become part of our ongoing business, though no formal proposal (Action #3) has been drafted.

**Recommendation #6**

Pursue competitive funding for MA students, and maintain opportunities for them to be teaching assistants.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee expects the Department to work through normal channels of advocacy for the means to address this recommendation.

**Implementation Plan (3<sup>rd</sup> Priority)**

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Dean of Humanities to report by the end of Academic year 2019/20

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 Department will meet to discuss further options and opportunities for graduate funding	2019	2020

**Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:**

Faculty members with external funding have often hired incoming graduate students as Research Assistants, and that practice will continue. Given that we often don't know which faculty members will have such funding (or how much), it's difficult to use this possibility as a stable incentive for potential graduate students, but we pursue the possibility when we can.

**Recommendation #7**

Increase diversity of literature course options.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted. The Committee expects that this issue will be included in regular curricular review using the curriculum map developed for the Self Study.

**Implementation Plan (3<sup>rd</sup> Priority)**

Responsible for approving: Department  
 Responsible for resources: Department  
 Responsible for implementation: Department  
 Timeline: Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2019/20

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 Department will meet to discuss ways to diversify our literature course options	2017	2018

**Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:**

The Department's first instinct was to do a full accounting of the texts and authors regularly taught, particularly in our first- and second-year courses; while we were reasonably happy with the results of that accounting, we remain aware that it's always possible, always necessary, to do better. A number of instructors have worked to revise their existing syllabi, in some cases to offer greater diversity within their courses and in others to better draw attention to the range of texts, authors, and contexts to be discussed. The Chair will make a comprehensive proposal to the Department for curriculum changes to our first- and second-year programming before the end of the 2020-21 academic year, in part to even further address this issue. When we are once again able to meet face-to-face and have the appropriately detailed discussions, we will begin the process of implementing those changes.

**Recommendation #8**

Develop indigenous literature course offerings, and explore options for inviting Indigenous scholars into program (eg. Tenure track position; Indigenous Writer in Residence; Indigenous Postdoctoral Fellow).



**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee encourages the Department to connect with the Two Row Council to explore options for implementing this recommendation.

**Implementation Plan (1<sup>st</sup> Priority)**

Responsible for approving: Department  
 Responsible for resources: Department  
 Responsible for implementation: Department  
 Timeline: Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2017/18

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 Continue to assess Indigenous authors and texts already integrated as part of existing courses	2017	Ongoing
Action #2 ENCW Committee to continue discussion of Writer-in-Residence program proposal with this Recommendation in mind	2017	Ongoing
Action #3 Chair to arrange to meet (summer 2018) with representative from the Two Row Council to discuss this Recommendation	2019	2020

**Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:**

Though deeply committed to the principles of Indigenization and Decolonization, the Department wants to ensure that any changes we make in those terms are carefully integrated into the acknowledged strengths of our program; simply adding courses for sake of adding them would be, we think, self-defeating. Moreover, it is our position that would be counterproductive, even inappropriate, for a Department consisting almost entirely of white, settler scholars to offer a more substantial suite of Indigenous Literature courses, however committed we may be to the intent of this recommendation. We did submit a(n unsuccessful) proposal for a CRC in Indigenous Writing (Action #2), and we hope to be able to submit that proposal again if the opportunity presents itself. Through various other administrative responsibilities, a number of our departmental colleagues have informal connections with Two Row Council, though we have not had a formal meeting with them as of yet. In February 2020, the Chair and the Undergraduate Programs Coordinator met with the VP Indigenous Engagement to discuss strategies and opportunities. Both parties recognize the complexities involved, particularly when resources are scarce and there are no self-identifying Indigenous faculty members in the Department; we did discuss, however, the possibility of establishing a

formal co-major in English and Indigenous Studies. It was a productive conversation, and we hope to continue to connect with the new VP Indigenous Engagement and her office going forward. Through the Office of the Dean of Humanities, the Chair will meet with the new VP Indigenous Engagement in early 2021 to discuss a variety of initiatives and opportunities for further enhancing our commitments to Indigenization and Decolonization.

### Recommendation #9

Consult with English Undergraduate Association to explore additional ways to develop a strong undergraduate community, including space and/or other amenities.

#### ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted. The Committee believes that the Department is best positioned to determine appropriate strategies to move forward on this issue.

#### Implementation Plan (2<sup>nd</sup> Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2018/19

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 The Chair and Undergraduate Officer will meet with incoming ESA Executive to ways to develop a stronger sense of community among the students	2018	2019

#### Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:

The ESA continues to be somewhat less active than it has been in past years—even moreso during the pandemic—but the Department, particularly the Chair and the Undergraduate Programs Coordinator (the primary faculty contact for the group), continues to connect with them when possible. The ongoing global pandemic has further hampered the activities of the ESA, though the current Executive have worked to establish some virtual connections with their fellow majors. In addition, in summer 2019, the Chair identified a lounge/meeting space in our Department and invited our senior undergraduates to share that space with us. That space is now fairly well-used by our Honours cohort, who have indicated to the Chair (informally) that they have enjoyed having the opportunity to use a shared work and social space in the Department itself. We all very much look forward to returning to that space in the near future.

**Recommendation #10**

Consider offering one or two online courses.

**ARC Disposition of the Recommendation**

ARC considers the recommendation to be current practice. No further action is required.

**Implementation Plan**

No further action required.

**Recommendation #11**

Confidential Recommendation

As per the IQAP Section 2.10 regarding confidential recommendations “relating to personnel issues or other matters involving specific individuals” found in the Reviewers’ Report, these recommendations “will only be released to the Dean(s), the academic unit and ARC.”

**C. Unit Summative Analysis and Evaluation**

1. To what extent has the Unit achieved the improvements suggested by the reviewers?

We believe we have fully integrated the reviewers’ recommendations into both our day-to-day operations and, perhaps more importantly, our future plans; as a result, programs that were already deemed to be of “Good Quality” are now even more so. A number of the recommendations take the form of ongoing processes rather than definite, “completeable” actions—though those specific actions that could be completed, such as discontinuing the ECUL program, have been. We were pleased to see that many of the recommendations related to our grad program, the ENCW program, and efforts to decolonize the classroom (and the University more broadly) line up neatly with plans and practices that were already in place. We take seriously those recommendations that urge us to carefully “consider” various developments and changes, and we will continue to do so urgently but deliberately.

2. What overall impact has it had on the Unit’s programs?

The overall impact of this most recent cyclical review has been largely positive. The discontinuation of the ECUL program has helped us to streamline our offerings and provides a more focused framework for recruitment; working to broaden recruitment efforts and funding opportunities for the grad program enhances the existing strengths of that program and provides a roadmap for growth; carefully considering and better articulating how our programs offer experiential opportunities and work to decolonize the University helps us to demonstrate how we advance the University’s strategic priorities and provides key benchmarks in our efforts to achieve some of our own internal goals. Perhaps more than anything else, the review process has further encouraged us to think long-term, to recommit to a process of continuous critical self-reflection, and to make plans that always begin from a consideration of our existing strengths.

3. Is the Unit adopting a process of continuous quality improvement for its programs?

We believe that we have always had in place a process of continuous quality improvement, but this review and the most recent iteration of Brock's Strategic Plan have prompted renewed attention to some specific areas, areas already repeated a number of times in this summary. Perhaps the most significant shift, though, will be in terms of how our unit talks about and reports on its programs and future plans: while it certainly true that the reviewers brought some key concerns to our attention—particularly in terms of how we maintain a sense of community and cohesion among our programs and various student groups—our overall impression is that some of those issues (in terms, say, of the diversity of our course offerings and funding opportunities for grad students) may appear less “concerning” if we take greater care when we discuss and describe our ongoing commitments to them.

4. How well do the programs now align with Brock University strategic priorities?

Again, we believe that our programs have always fully aligned with the University's strategic priorities, but the most recent review cycle has helped prompt us to better describe our programs so as to make that alignment even more clear. Specifically:

- being urged to carefully think through, for example, the future growth of the ENCW program and the ways in which all of our courses engage strategies for experiential education ensures that we continue to **offer a transformational and accessible academic and university experience**
- considering in greater detail and with increased urgency how to incorporate creative options into our graduate program, pursuing further funding opportunities for grad students, and working to diversify our course options ensures that we continue to help **build research capacity across the University**—in terms of both our faculty and the students who flow through our programs
- working to better articulate the experiential learning opportunities offered by our programs and planning to further develop those opportunities ensures that we continue to actively **enhance the life and vitality of our local region and beyond**
- taking proper inventory of our course offerings, better sharing information with colleagues about the content of our individual courses, and seeking opportunities to connect with Indigenous scholars and community members, both on campus and in our larger regional and professional communities, ensures that we will continue to **foster a culture of inclusivity, accessibility, reconciliation and decolonization**

As a unit, we believe deeply that these have always been priorities for us, and we've welcomed this opportunity to demonstrate and properly articulate our strengths in and commitments to these ideals.

5. How does this review and its results position the programs as the Unit moves into the next review cycle?

The current Chair hopes that plans to revise our first-year course offerings and curriculum—plans prompted at least in part by some of these recommendations—will be in place before the next review cycle so that we can get some detailed feedback on those revisions. Similarly, the ENCW and WRDS programs will, by the time the next review cycle begins in

2024-25, have developed to the point where we and reviewers are better positioned to assess both how they stand as discrete programs and how effectively they are integrated with and contribute to the ongoing success of all the programs offered by the Department. Finally, if current trends continue, the next review cycle will also consider the strengths of our grad program after a number of consecutive years of meeting or exceeding enrollment targets.

#### **D. ARC Final Summary**

In final summary of the 2016/17 cyclical academic review of the programs offered by the Department of English Language and Literature, ARC has determined the following:

1. The Reviewers' Recommendations have been addressed satisfactorily.
2. The Unit has established a direction for next steps as it prepares for the next review cycle.
3. The Unit has achieved a broad-based, reflective and forward-looking self-assessment.