

Geography and Tourism Studies Graduate and Undergraduate Programs Review Year 2 (2023) - FAR Implementation Report (reviewed 2020/21)

Recommendation #1

GTS should undertake a strategic visioning of the Department as a whole.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2021/22

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two*	Year Three
Action #1 The Department developed a Departmental Strategic Plan in 2020.	Chair	O	C	

Comments 2022:

The Department of Geography and Tourism Studies (GTS) adopted a Departmental Strategic Plan in 2020. Our plan is to revisit this document during our Annual Departmental Retreat in May 2022 in order to update it with consideration for the recommendations from this Cyclical Program Review and to ensure we are making progress towards the goals we set out in that plan.

Comments 2023:

Although the Departmental Strategic Plan was developed last year (and action completed) it is being monitored continuously by the Strategic Plan Committee. The Committee has been reviewing the current version of the plan in order to determine whether any proposed changes should be made at the Annual Departmental Retreat in May 2023.

*On Target (T), Delayed (D), Complete (C), Complete and Ongoing (O)

Recommendation #2

GTS should prioritize a faculty line in Geomatics as part of its faculty renewal strategy.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to prioritize a faculty line in Geomatics in future faculty renewal plans to be accepted. The Committee recognizes that decisions on faculty resources lie outside of its jurisdiction.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving: Department
 Responsible for resources: Department
 Responsible for implementation: Department
 Timeline: Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2021/22

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two*	Year Three
Action #1 The Department of GTS will prioritize expertise in Geomatics in future hires.	Chair	T	T	

Comments 2022:

GTS will continue to engage with the Dean and Provost to secure future hires in Geomatics, as well as other areas of departmental priority.

Comments 2023:

The Department has continued to engage with the Dean and Provost to secure future hires in Geomatics, as well as other areas of departmental priority. It has also been working to develop an articulation agreement with Fleming College for joint Geomatics programming as a further means of building student demand for the Department’s Geomatics courses.

Recommendation #3

GTS should also prioritize the recruitment of a physical geographer to ensure the long-term viability of the BSc Geography.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to prioritize the recruitment of a physical geographer in future faculty renewal plans to be accepted. The Committee recognizes that decisions on faculty resources lie outside of its jurisdiction.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving: Department
 Responsible for resources: Department
 Responsible for implementation: Department
 Timeline: Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2021/22

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two*	Year Three
Action #1 The Department of GTS will prioritize expertise in Physical Geography in future hires.	Chair	T	T	

Comments 2022:

GTS continues ongoing discussions with the Dean and Provost on the allocation of resources, departmental priorities and priority hirings.

Comments 2023:

As in 2022, the Department continues to engage in ongoing discussions with the Dean and Provost on the allocation of resources, departmental priorities and priority hirings. The Department has also submitted an application to the University for the approval of a Canada Research Chair position focused on climate change and climatology and was also recently granted funding via the Dean’s Discretionary Fund to engage in a comprehensive study of physical geography programs at other universities across Ontario in order to identify departmental strengths and opportunities for differentiating the Brock program from others.

Recommendation #4

In order to advance a more coherent university-wide strategy on sustainability, we recommend:

- a) A dialogue and internal review on how the sustainability dimension of [the] university strategic plan can best be achieved through campus-wide collaboration.
- b) That the university conducts campus-wide sustainability curriculum mapping to identify duplication and areas of synergy. With support from Senior Administration, GTS could lead this exercise.
- c) That GTS be a core hub for sustainability as a more-encompassing unit. GTS can bring together other contributing units as well (e.g., ESRC [Environmental Sustainability Research Centre], Earth Sciences, Health Sciences, Goodman School of Business, new Engineering minor, and others).

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to advance a university-wide strategy on sustainability to be beyond the scope of this review. The Committee recognizes the opportunity for collaboration between the Department and sustainability stakeholders across the university and the support indicated by the Deans in their responses to the recommendation. However, decisions on the advancement of an institutional strategy, which spans many Departments, Centres and Faculties would not be within ARC’s jurisdiction.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation not accepted.

Recommendation #5

The Department should re-examine and consider an appropriate name change / rebranding for the tourism program.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2021-22

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two*	Year Three
<p>Action #1 GTS will submit a request to change the name of the program as part of a larger request for Major Modifications to the Tourism and Environment degree.</p>	Chair	T	D	

Comments 2022:

The Tourism Committee has met several times since we received the Final Assessment Report. In Fall 2022 the Department will be submitting a Request for Major Modifications to change the name of the degree from a BA in Tourism and Environment to a BA in Sustainable Tourism. Two Concentrations will also be added (Concentration in Management and Concentration in Planning and Development).

Comments 2023:

The Tourism Committee continues to work on implementing this recommendation; however, the process has been delayed with two of the five Tourism faculty members being on a one-year Sabbatical Leave from July 2022 to June 2023 and a third being away for our Term Abroad Program in the Winter Term of 2022-2023. The Department now anticipates submitting its full Request for Major Modifications to ARC by the end of Summer 2023.

Recommendation #6

Plans to develop a new Masters in Tourism program should be put on hold for now.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee understands that the Department is investigating the possibility of a new field of study such as “Tourism Geography”, within the existing MA which could serve as an alternative in the meantime.

Implementation Plan (2nd Priority)

Responsible for approving: Department
 Responsible for resources: Department
 Responsible for implementation: Department
 Timeline: Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2022/23

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two*	Year Three
Action #1 The Department of GTS is examining the development of a Tourism Geography stream in the existing MA Geography program.	Graduate Program Director (GPD)	T	C	

Comments 2022:

The Department’s Tourism Committee and Graduate Program Committee will continue to evaluate the potential for developing a Tourism Geography stream in the MA in Geography program.

Comments 2023:

Given its current faculty complement, and the minimum class size requirement for graduate courses, the Department has concluded that developing a Tourism Geography stream in the MA program would not be feasible at this time.

Recommendation #7

The Department should explore the potential for collaboration with Niagara College to help develop post-graduate degree opportunities and more coordinated regional approaches to tourism programming.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted.

Implementation Plan (2nd Priority)

Responsible for approving: Department
 Responsible for resources: Department
 Responsible for implementation: Department
 Timeline: Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2022/23

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two*	Year Three
Action #1 We are exploring and developing collaborative programs with Niagara College and others.	Chair	T	T	

Comments 2022:

The Department of GTS is currently working with Brock’s Transfer Pathways Specialist to develop a collaborative program with Fleming College’s GIS program and Durham College’s Tourism programs. We also plan to further discussions with Niagara College’s Tourism and Hospitality program.

Comments 2023:

The Department has made significant progress in this regard and expects its first new collaborative program to be implemented in the near future. Other discussions are ongoing.

Recommendation #8

GTS should undertake a comprehensive review of its field courses as outlined in greater detail below.

Supporting/Clarifying Text from Reviewer’s Report

Field/excursion courses are a core element of both geography and tourism studies and consistent with the university Strategic Plan priority of internationalization. We offer the following recommendations related to the challenges of offering consistent international experiences:

- a) Review the suite of field/excursion courses and the related requirements by the Geography and Tourism Studies programs. Consider allowing students more flexibility to choose from a cluster (i.e., ‘one of’) of field/excursion courses to fulfill any related requirements to address student concerns about the appropriate fit of the Peterborough course, and potentially help achieve the threshold of enrollment for international field courses more often.
- b) Establish dialogue with other academic units at Brock that are conducting field courses and explore integrating inter-disciplinary groups of students that can be travel to the same destination with different but related educational experiences.
- c) Discuss the potential development of a new field course in collaboration with the new Canada-Caribbean Institute and its diverse regional partners.
- d) Consult with the Dean about a reliable budget allocation for 1-2 courses per year, and/or also potential arrangements to support early deposits needed to arrange travel and accommodations to lower the price that students eventually pay, should and potential increase early enrollments.
- e) Consult with the Dean about potential flexibility in class minimums for international field courses.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee expects that the Department is best-positioned to determine a response to each of the reviewers’ listed suggestions.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2021/22

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two*	Year Three
Action #1 The Department of GTS reviews field course offerings annually.	Chair	T	T	

Comments 2022:

The Field Course Committee in GTS reviews our commitments to field course offerings annually. The Tourism Committee also recognizes the need for a separate field experience for Tourism majors. A new field course leveraging our proximity to tourism destinations in Niagara will be presented along with other proposed program modifications, which will be submitted to ARC in Fall 2022. The Dean of FOSS has also initiated a two-year pilot program to provide funding for students participating in extra-local and international field experiences that GTS offers.

Comments 2023:

A new field course leveraging our proximity to tourism destinations in Niagara will be presented along with other proposed program modifications, which will be submitted to ARC in Fall 2023. The Dean’s financial assistance to students wishing to take part in field courses (including Vancouver and Croatia) has been highly successful and have helped considerably to increase student demand for these experiential learning opportunities. Field courses to London (U.K.) and Vancouver for 2024 are currently under development.

Recommendation #9

The curriculum committee should review how reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and decolonization are included in the current curriculum.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving: Department
 Responsible for resources: Department
 Responsible for implementation: Department
 Timeline: Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2021/22

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two*	Year Three
Action #1 The Department of GTS will discuss at annual retreat in May 2022.	Chair	T	T	

Comments 2022:

GTS will incorporate a discussion of reconciliation and decolonization at our Annual Retreat in May 2022 with the aim of addressing these in our Departmental Strategic Planning document.

Comments 2023:

The Department continues to review how reconciliation with Indigenous peoples and decolonization are included in the current curriculum as part of its strategic planning process.

Recommendation #10

The curriculum committee/Department should review the range of proposed new minors/specializations in light of recent faculty losses and potential near-term faculty renewal.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to review proposed new minors/specializations to be accepted for consideration. The Committee recognizes that the Department’s two existing minors have been thoroughly reviewed and approved through normal channels and have the continued support of the Dean.

Implementation Plan (2nd Priority)

Responsible for approving: Department
 Responsible for resources: Department
 Responsible for implementation: Department
 Timeline: Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2022/23

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two*	Year Three
Action #1 The Department of GTS is reviewing all program offerings, including Minors.	Chair	T	T	

Comments 2022:

All recently developed Minor program offerings in GTS were approved by the Dean of FOSS, UPC, and Senate after we consulted with other academic units in selecting the required and elective courses. All recent Minors were developed with the knowledge that we would rely on contributions from other units to fulfill some of the requirements.

Comments 2023:

The Department has been successful in its implementation of new Minors, with the Minor in Urban and Planning Studies becoming a particularly popular option for students.

Recommendation #11

We recommend that the Department and Library staff conduct an assessment of how other universities are utilizing their map libraries.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be not accepted as stated. The Committee recognizes that the Library is currently undergoing a structural review which includes an assessment of the role of the Map Library. ARC understands that the Department has a strong connection with the Map Library and does not have concerns with the utilization of this resource.

Implementation Plan

Recommendation not accepted.

Recommendation #12

We strongly recommend that senior administration promptly conduct a workplace safety review of GTS lab spaces, and implement remedial actions as necessary.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to review workplace safety to be accepted for consideration. The Committee understands that there are existing mechanisms in place for monitoring health and safety across the institution. ARC expects that the Department will work through these channels to address any concerns that arise regarding workplace safety.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving: Department
 Responsible for resources: Department
 Responsible for implementation: Department
 Timeline: Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2021/22

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two*	Year Three
Action #1 GTS Lab spaces are routinely inspected by Brock Health and Safety personnel.	Chair	0		

Comments 2022:

Our lab spaces, including fumehoods, chemical storage cabinets and safety equipment, such as eye wash stations, are inspected by the University Health and Safety Committee. We will continue to work closely with them to ensure our lab spaces meet all safety requirements.

Comments 2023:

Our lab spaces, including fumehoods, chemical storage cabinets and safety equipment, such as eye wash stations, are inspected by the University Health and Safety Committee. We will continue to work closely with them to ensure our lab spaces meet all safety requirements.

Recommendation #13

With respect to the Tourism Studies Co-op program, we recommend:

- a) Exploring options to offer undergrad tourism courses all year round (perhaps through sessional instructors or ILTA positions);
- b) Offering some required and critically important UG courses as ASYNC [asynchronous] online;
- c) Exploring options to offer 0.5 courses in a condensed format not just in Spring/Summer but in the Fall/Winter as well (there are several examples such as super-courses that run for one week or two, intensive courses that run for 6 weeks); or even schedule course more flexibly (evening, weekends);
- d) Allowing students to take UG courses from other universities through LOPs (letter of permission) either online or in person;
- e) Avoid cancelling UG courses due to low enrollment, which creates domino-effects for students and disruptions for faculty members;
- f) Establishing agreements with other interested stakeholders within Brock (Trans-disciplinary centres, Canada Games, Indigenous Studies, Canada-Caribbean Institute, Health Sciences) and outside (Centennial College) to find additional Co-op placements for students.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted for consideration. The Committee expects that the Department is best-positioned to determine a response to each of the reviewers' listed suggestions.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving:	Department
Responsible for resources:	Department
Responsible for implementation:	Department
Timeline:	Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2021/22

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two*	Year Three
Action #1 GTS is reviewing the Tourism program and course offerings.	Chair	T	T	

Comments 2022:

The Tourism Committee is in the process of revising the Tourism program with the aim to submit these changes to ARC in Fall 2022. With regards to Spring course offerings and online asynchronous TOUR courses, we are offering two TOUR courses in Spring 2022 and both will be online.

Comments 2023:

After some delays resulting primarily from faculty sabbatical leaves, the Tourism Committee is in the process of revising the Tourism program with the aim to submit these changes to ARC later in 2023.

Recommendation #14

Review the viability of the MRP [Major Research Paper] graduate studies option.	
<p>ARC Disposition of the Recommendation ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted for consideration. The Committee understands that there is broad confidence in the viability of the MRP, while acknowledging that improvements may arise through curriculum review and renewal.</p>	
<p>Implementation Plan (2nd Priority) Responsible for approving: Department Responsible for resources: Department Responsible for implementation: Department Timeline: Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2022/23</p>	

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two*	Year Three
Action #1 We plan to continue with the MRP option but will consult with the Faculty of Graduate Studies to improve the program.	GPD	T	C	

Comments 2022:

We have no plans to remove the MRP option in our graduate program because it is well subscribed and offers good value to our students. The GPD and Graduate Program Committee will consult with the Faculty of Graduate Studies to explore the potential to broaden the courses that might count towards the degree.

Comments 2023:

The MRP stream will not be eliminated; however, the Department will put in a request to Faculty of Graduate Studies to extend the program length to five terms from the current four.

Recommendation #15

Develop a web-based graduate student handbook.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be already current practice. The Committee encourages the Department to continue collaborating with institutional resources regarding the graduate student handbook.

Implementation Plan

No action required. Current practice.

Comments 2022:

We have had a graduate student handbook that contains most of what the reviewers recommended since the inception of the MA in Geography program. It has also been posted online for approximately six years and our graduate students are routinely informed about its usefulness as a resource. With the aid of a Graduate Ambassador in 2021-22, the Department is updating it with specific information for international students. We are also working to revise our departmental website the MA Geography handbook will be more accessible and easier to locate with these changes.

Recommendation #16

Update the GTS website, particularly with a view to highlighting student successes and experiences.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee encourages the Department to consult with the Tourism and Geography Society (TAGS) student club, when implementing this recommendation.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving: Department
 Responsible for resources: Department
 Responsible for implementation: Department
 Timeline: Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2021/22

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two*	Year Three
Action #1 The department website will be redesigned.	Chair	T	O	

Comments 2022:

We are working with the FOSS Dean’s office personnel to redesign and update our website.

Comments 2023:

The Department’s Academic Advisor & Communications Coordinator is working diligently to improve the website in collaboration with faculty and staff.

Recommendation #17

The Curriculum Committee should initiate/continue a comprehensive review of all degree programs.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be current practice. The Committee recognizes that the 2020/21 review required a comprehensive review of the curriculum for all the programs offered by the Department. In addition, the Department will be required to report on the implementation of the curriculum-based recommendations from this review for the next four years.

Implementation Plan

No action required. Current practice.

Comments 2022:

The departmental Curriculum Committee is active each year reviewing and revising all of our programs.

Recommendation #18

As part of continuing curriculum reform, we recommend the following:

- g) [a] Explore where combining 4th year and grad enrollments could offer synergies to achieve upper year enrollment thresholds;
- h) [b] Review course offerings/focus are adequately serving Concurrent Education students' needs for provincially approved teachable subject areas; and,
- i) [c] Consider expanding larger enrollment service courses (potentially online offerings) in targeted areas that Geography can serve the campus (e.g., interdisciplinary global climate change or pandemics and society).

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted for consideration. The Committee expects that the Department is best-positioned to determine a response to each of the reviewers' listed suggestions.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving: Department
 Responsible for resources: Department
 Responsible for implementation: Department
 Timeline: Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2021/22

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two*	Year Three
Action #1 We will explore new and revised course offerings and modes of delivery.	Chair	T	T	

Comments 2022:

The departmental Curriculum Committee is active each year reviewing and revising all of our programs.

Comments 2023:

The Curriculum Committee continues to consider, as needed, any possible changes (additions or deletions) to the Department's course offerings.

Recommendation #19

Review time to completion data of Masters programs to determine if a case should be made to extend graduate student funding support to 6 semesters from the current 5 semesters.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving: Department
 Responsible for resources: Department
 Responsible for implementation: Department
 Timeline: Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2021/22

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two*	Year Three
Action #1 Changes to the graduate funding model will be developed and proposed to the Faculty of Graduate Studies.	GPD	T	T	

Comments 2022:

The GPD will work with the departmental graduate program committee and the Dean of Graduate Studies to determine the feasibility of changing the current graduate funding support to 6 semesters, from the current 5 semesters, recognizing that this will involve a major program change.

Comments 2023:

The Department will be proposing to extend the MRP stream to a five-term program and the Thesis stream to a six-term program.

Recommendation #20

Reconsider the mandatory internship milestone to graduate from the undergraduate program.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted for consideration.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving: Department
 Responsible for resources: Department
 Responsible for implementation: Department
 Timeline: Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2021/22

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two*	Year Three
Action #1 The Department is considering changes to the internship course.	Chair	T	T	

Comments 2022:

The Curriculum Committee is examining the implications for making the internship course optional.

Comments 2023:

The Honours Internship course remains a critical part of the Department's Honours programs; however, the Curriculum Committee continues to monitor enrollments and student feedback to determine whether any changes should be given serious consideration.

Recommendation #21

Explore expanded collaborations with the new Canada-Caribbean Institute, particularly with respect to advancing sustainable tourism research and teaching.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted.

Implementation Plan (2nd Priority)

Responsible for approving: Department
 Responsible for resources: Department
 Responsible for implementation: Department
 Timeline: Dean of Social Sciences to report by the end of academic year 2022/23

Actions	Responsibility	Year One	Year Two*	Year Three
Action #1 The Department will explore collaborations with the Canada-Caribbean Institute.	Chair	T	T	

Comments 2022:

GTS recognizes opportunities exist to develop new field courses, exchange programs, and research collaborations with the Canada-Caribbean Institute and will work with that group to develop collaborative opportunities.

Comments 2023:

GTS recognizes opportunities exist to develop new field courses, exchange programs, and research collaborations with the Canada-Caribbean Institute and will work with that group to develop collaborative opportunities.