



Four Year Report (2024) BA General Humanities Undergraduate Program (reviewed 2019-20)

A. Summary of Review

1. This review was conducted under the terms and conditions of the IQAP approved by Senate on May 25, 2016.
2. The Review Committee consisted of two external reviewers: Kathleen Kellett (Toronto Metropolitan University) and Gavin Brockett (Wilfrid Laurier University) and one internal reviewer, Christie Milliken (Brock University).
3. The site visit occurred on January 15-17, 2020.
4. The Final Assessment Report was approved by Senate on May 27, 2020.
5. The academic programs offered by the Faculty of Humanities which were examined as part of the review are listed below, with the reviewers having assigned the following outcome categories:

Program (s)	Excellent Quality	Good Quality	Good Quality with Concerns	Non-Viable
BA General Humanities			X	

6. The next review of the BA General Humanities program will be in 2027/28.

B: Recommendations

Recommendation #1

The word “General” be dropped and that the program be referred to as the three-year “BA Pass Degree in Humanities”.

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:	Unit
Responsible for resources:	Unit
Responsible for implementation:	Unit
Timeline:	Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2020/21

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 Propose Change to ARC, and then APC.	2021	2024

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:

Articulation Agreements with Mohawk College and Niagara College create a pathway for students at those institutions to transfer to the GHUM program after two years with 6.0 credits in hand. It appears that plans to establish a similar Agreement with Fanshawe College have been paused for the time being. The existing Agreements use the program name “General Humanities” in the body of the documents in several places; any change of name on our end will require a review of the terms of the Agreements (an admittedly straightforward one, but still...). These Agreements are in place until 2025; when they expire, or are renewed after that, the Dean’s Office will revisit this recommendation as the language of any new revised agreement is settled.

Recommendation #2

HUMA 1P50 be designated a required course for all students graduating with the BA Pass Degree in the Humanities.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted for consideration.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Unit
Responsible for resources:	Unit
Responsible for implementation:	Unit
Timeline:	Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2020/21

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 Consider making HUMA 1P50 a required course for Pass GHUM students.	2020	2021

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:

In consultation with the Department of English Language and Literature, where the course has been homed since late 2022, we continue to monitor enrollment patterns, and we always strongly encourage incoming GHUM students to take it. We have also recently made the decision to begin offering it in the Spring-Summer term, and the first iteration of that version will run online in Spring 2024. However, as has been noted from the beginning of this process, we stand by our conclusion that the course should not be required for students in the GHUM program. As was noted in a previous report, “it has become increasingly clear that making the course required for GHUM student may exacerbate an existing problem: despite prominent messaging in the Calendar, from Advising, and in the course syllabus, many students too often incorrectly assume that HUMA 1P50 can satisfy context credit requirements, and requiring it, for any group of students, may make that assumption even harder to combat.” Nevertheless, as the program continues to evolve, we will bear this recommendation in mind as student demand and demographics shift.

Recommendation #3

The creation of a third-year HUMA .5 credit independent study course that would be optional to students in the BA Pass Degree in the Humanities.
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ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted for consideration as an option for students. The Committee understands that the program may be constrained by limited resources and therefore opt to use existing Faculty of Humanities independent study courses or a directed reading course to address this recommendation.

Implementation Plan (2nd Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Unit
Responsible for resources:	Unit
Responsible for implementation:	Unit
Timeline:	Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2021/22

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 Survey Faculty of Humanities calendar offerings for independent study courses that may be open to GHUM students.	2021	2022
Action #2 To consider creating an optional third-year independent study half-credit course.	2021	2022

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:

The survey of existing independent study courses offered by other Faculty of Humanities (FOH) units confirmed that most of them are available at the fourth-year level to Honours students (CANA, CLAS, ENCW, ENGL, FREN, HIST, MARS, MLLC, MUSI, PHIL, WRDS), though some units (DART, IASC, STAC, and VISA) do offer options at the third-year level. We appreciate the intent behind the recommendation to design and offer third-year independent study course for GHUM students, but a number of factors make it undesirable, if not impossible to accomplish. First, there are no faculty members assigned to the GHUM program, so any independent study option would be unscheduled teaching offered by faculty from other units, where they already have plenty of unscheduled teaching. Second, there are no courses specifically homed in GHUM since GHUM is not an “academic unit” as defined by the relevant offices and documents on campus, making many of the basic administrative tasks associated with running courses difficult to complete in a timely and efficient manner. Finally, creating an independent study option runs counter to our plan to find department “homes” for as many GHUM students as possible. Nevertheless, in those rare cases where a student pursuing a GHUM degree expresses interest in a particular independent study option, the Associate Dean, in consultation with Advisors and Department Chairs, remains committed to facilitating that process.

Recommendation #4

The Faculty investigate the possibility of creating a four-year Bachelor of Arts in Humanities that would include a fourth-year capstone course.

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:	Unit
Responsible for resources:	Unit
Responsible for implementation:	Unit
Timeline:	Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2020/21

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 Faculty investigate the possibility of creating a four-year Bachelor of Arts in Humanities.	2020	2021
Action #2 If a four-year degree is possible, consider including a fourth-year capstone course.	2020	2021

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:

As was stated in the first FAR report in 2021: “While there is institutional support for a 4-Year option in the General Humanities, the nomenclature issue remains (that is, the 4-year degree option available to non-Honours students in a 4-Year degree with major, and General students do not hold a major). As per the Academic Calendar, the BA degree offered by Brock includes: Honours, With Major, Pass. Given this institutional barrier, there will be no further consideration of this recommendation.”

Recommendation #5

Clarification of the notation that appears on a student’s record when they are adjudicated out of a Major to ensure that it is both accurate and conveys a positive message.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. ARC understands that consultation with the Registrar’s Office will be necessary to assess the viability of this recommendation.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Unit
Responsible for resources:	Unit
Responsible for implementation:	Unit
Timeline:	Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2020/21

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Completed
Action #1 Discuss messaging around adjudication with the Registrar's Office.	2020	2023

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:

After discussions with both the Registrar's Office and Central Advising, it was determined that existing messaging concerning adjudication practices and options serves the purpose it is designed to serve, and that no revisions or clarifications were required. However, the Associate Dean and FOH Advising team will continue to ensure that students who either A) have been adjudicated out of a major to which they may wish to return or B) are seeking entry into a different major, whatever their adjudication status may be, are advised appropriately—and that includes helping some students to see the value in a completed degree in General Humanities, if that remains the best available option to them.

Recommendation #6

Ensure improved tracking of GHUM students through the program with annual audit by the Associate Dean, Faculty of Humanities, and Academic Advisors for the Faculty and the Student Success Centre to provide students with advice regarding (re)-enrolment in a major or in one or more minors as well as advice regarding academic support.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and already in progress.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)	
Responsible for approving:	Unit
Responsible for resources:	Unit
Responsible for implementation:	Unit
Timeline:	Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2020/21

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Complete
Action #1 Associate Dean's Office will conduct an academic year-end audit of GHUM students, and contact appropriate Chairs and Directors if there are potential majors within this group.	2021	Ongoing

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:

The year-end audit of GHUM students is now a standard practice for the Associate Dean. The process of reviewing the records of GHUM students and working to connect them with Chairs and Directors to find a more specific major home will normally be conducted towards the end of April each year, when most grades are in and a better assessment can be made.

Recommendation #7

The Dean's Office commit effort and resources to developing a sense of shared identity and community among all students in the BA Pass Degree in the Humanities.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers the recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee understands that the unique nature of the program and a diverse student cohort will make efforts to foster a shared sense of identity and community a challenge.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

Responsible for approving: Unit
 Responsible for resources: Unit
 Responsible for implementation: Unit
 Timeline: Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2020/21

Actions Taken	Year Action Started	Year Action Complete
Action #1 Dean's Office include GHUM students in its orientation activities.	2021	Ongoing
Action #2 Dean's Office organize a mid-year check-in with GHUM students.	2021	Ongoing

Explanation of Actions Taken, Status and Results:

GHUM students are directly welcomed as part of the annual Fall Orientation session, and the details of the GHUM program are included in all recruitment event information sessions (Fall Preview Day and Spring Open House, for example). The Associate Dean sends out a general email

twice a year to all registered GHUM majors, inviting them to contact him (or an Academic Advisor) if they want to discuss their progress and plans. And the monthly newsletter to all FOH students often includes specific mention of the GHUM program, noting events or deadlines of special relevance to that group of students. With these points of contact now standard practice, organizing a mid-year, in-person check-in seems to us redundant; however, we are prepared to reinstitute the practice in some form if students need it or ask for it.

C. Unit Summative Analysis and Evaluation

1. **To what extent has the Program achieved the improvements suggested by the reviewers?**
 Many of the recommendations focus on the need for better communication with the students in, or considering, the program. While we understand that any effort to maintain good communication is by its very nature an ongoing process, we believe that we have made direct and specific improvement by attending to the specifics of the recommendations.
2. **What overall impact has it had on the program?**
 Somewhat to our (happy) surprise, we have seen some growth in the number of students who are choosing the GHUM program, at least as a pathway into their university studies. While growth isn't necessarily one of the program's goals—remembering that our plan is to work to find department homes for as many GHUM students as possible—and while it's hard to directly connect our responses to the recommendations to that growth, it's nevertheless clear that students are finding the program and finding in it what they need. As we continue to engage in some of the practices prompted by the recommendations, we anticipate that interest in the program will continue to grow.
3. **How is the Program adopting a process of continuous quality improvement?**
 We begin with the assertion that “continuous quality improvement” is and has always been fundamental to all of our efforts in the Faculty of Humanities, and for the people most directly connected to the GHUM program (the Associate Dean and the Academic Advisors) we can say without hesitation that this is particularly true. But it's fair to say that this process has prompted us to consult more directly and consistently with various offices on campus, especially the Registrar's Office and Central Advising, to ensure that we are prepared to help our students navigate the complexities of university bureaucracy--something that is never easy, but perhaps even more so for students in a program not connected to a specific unit with a Chair or Director, a specific location, or an obvious and easily findable community. Working to ensure that GHUM students know they are being taken care remains a fundamental priority.
4. **How well does the program now align with Brock University strategic priorities?**
 The GHUM program, like all programs in the Faculty of Humanities, has always kept Brock's strategic priorities firmly in view. We **offer a transformational and accessible academic and university experience** by ensuring that students who may have struggled in their chosen major can still continue with their university studies and complete a viable and valuable degree program. By establishing a pathway into university studies for students who may not yet know exactly what they want from the experience, we create the conditions for them to find where their passions and aptitudes truly lie, a foundational and transformative experience necessary for any effort to **build research capacity across the University**. Non-

traditional learners make up a significant number of the students in the GHUM program, particularly mature and returning students, many of whom are local and not able to attend other institutions; the flexibility of the GHUM program, together with the commitment and dedication of the people most directly connected to program administration helps to ensure that we continue to **enhance the life and vitality of our local region**. Similarly, for many students who, for any of a number of reasons, find the degree paths offered by departments confining or limiting, the GHUM program offers both an alternative way to access what those units have to offer and the possibility of building a unique program that speaks directly to the needs and interests of the learner, all as part of our sustained efforts to **foster a culture of inclusivity, accessibility, reconciliation and decolonization**.

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

This process has helped to ensure that we have a set of specific, measurable actions to which we can point as evidence of our efforts to engage in continuous quality improvement. We look forward to the opportunity to demonstrate during the next review why the GHUM program is a valuable feature of the Faculty of Humanities, and to hear what recommendations might come to help us improve our students' experiences even more.

D. ARC Final Summary

In final summary of the 2019/20 cyclical academic review of the BA General Humanities program offered by the Faculty of Humanities, ARC has determined the following:

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