

Final Assessment Report

Music

Undergraduate Programs

(reviewed 2023/24)

A. Summary

1. The Department's Self-Study was considered and approved by the Senate Academic Review Committee (ARC) November 17, 2023.
2. The Review Committee consisted of two external reviewers: Margaret Walker (Queen's University) and Kimberly Francis (University of Guelph), and one internal reviewer, Tanya Martini (Brock University).
3. The site visit occurred January 25-26, 2024.
4. The Reviewers' Report was received February 23, 2024.
5. The Senate Undergraduate Program Committee (UPC) response was received March 13, 2024.
6. The Department response was received April 1, 2024.
7. The Dean, Faculty of Humanities, response was received April 8, 2024.
8. Annual Implementation Reports will be submitted from 2025-2028.
9. The next Cyclical Academic Review is scheduled to take place in 2031/2032.

The review was conducted under the terms and conditions of the June 2023 IQAP. The Self-Study was prepared prior to the ratification of the 2023 IQAP.

Program Outcome Categories:

Based on their knowledge of the discipline, the content of the Self-Study and the interviews conducted during the site visit, the Review Committee gave the programs the following Outcome Categories:

| Program(s) | Excellent Quality | Good Quality | Good Quality with Concerns | Non-Viable |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|----------------------------|------------|
| Bachelor of Music (Honours) | X | | | |
| BA in Music (Honours) | X | | | |
| BA with Major in Music | X | | | |
| BA (Pass) in Music | X | | | |
| Combined Major | | X | | |
| <i>If you have chosen 'Good Quality with Concerns', please summarize the specific concern(s) briefly below. If you have chosen 'Non-Viable', please summarize the specific reason(s) below.</i> | | | | |
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Executive Summary:

The Reviewers wrote:

Through detailed examination of the Self-Study report and our in-person site visit to the Marilyn I. Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts (MIWSFPA), we found that this small but dynamic music program is well-positioned to flourish in the future. The dedication of the staff and faculty members to the students, the program, and collegial relations with each other provides a firm foundation for the program. In particular, the recent curricular revisions have placed parts of the program at the leading edge of musicological scholarship and teaching, creating a context for further initiatives. The graduates of both BA (Mus) and BMus music programs most often become teachers, and the programs currently support these goals. Both the revisions and the focus on producing educators create opportunities for the future, including building links with Visual Arts in Sound Studies, enhancing connections to the community to provide experiential learning for future teachers, and continuing work on global engagements throughout the programs. Finally, the program has leveraged their partnership with the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre (PAC) to create performance opportunities that benefit the City of St. Catherines, the MIWSFPA community, and additional programs at Brock University. We commend the music program for building such robust connections with community partners and agree that future use of the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre is essential for the ongoing success of the program.

B. Program Strengths

The reviewers noted the following strengths:

As we heard from numerous stakeholders, one of this program’s greatest strengths is the clear sense of community and commitment to a culture of care demonstrated by the faculty and staff overseeing this program. Students spoke effusively about the attention they receive, leading to customized, rigorous musical training that speaks directly to their needs and goals. The energy, care, and erudition of the faculty and administration, particularly the

Chair, Dr. Karin Di Bella, is clear and a major component of the high morale, retention rates, and sense of community found in this program.

The five faculty members have been taking meaningful, important steps toward building out a more inclusive, globally-diverse curriculum. These efforts are most clearly apparent in the Music History courses and are starting to be visible in other parts of the curriculum as well. This new emphasis is commendable and marks the program as one of the first to address emerging pressures in the sector to challenge the Euro-centric and white-supremacist nature of post-secondary music studies. This curricular thrust will make the graduates of this program more relevant and competitive for employment and should be a part of ongoing recruitment activities as well.

From a differentiation perspective, we heard consistently that this program predominantly trains music teachers. We recommend that it celebrate this excellence and clearly brand itself as training the “Music Teachers of Today and Tomorrow.” In fact, at this time, there is an opportunity for Brock to further establish itself in the southern Ontario sector, following the closure of the Mohawk College music program and the pending closure of the McMaster University music program. Clearer and more targeted branding, along with further efforts to expand the inclusiveness of the curriculum, will play key roles in cutting through the noise and allowing Brock’s place in the sector to be clearly defined.

Finally, the facilities provided by the Marilyn I Walker School of Fine and Performing Arts are excellent. The connection with the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre provides state-of-the-art facilities, directly connects the program with the community, and facilitates excellent training for members of the program. This connection with the PAC is vital to the program’s success and has been thus far leveraged to an impressive degree by the program.

C. Opportunities for Improvement and Enhancement

Note: Supporting/clarifying text was provided for each recommendation.

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| Recommendation #1: Create an area of emphasis or concentration related to Sound Studies/Sound Design/and or Sound and Technology. |
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The Department responded:

We would love to expand into this area, and we have reached the maximum of what we can accomplish with current staffing. A dedicated specialist in the department is required to develop further in this area. A feasibility study is already in process for a “Sound Art” program that would be housed somewhere in the MIW, likely in MUSI. We agree with the reviewers’ suggestions of the great potential for such a program to bring together several different programs through this initiative. The Departments of Visual Arts, Dramatic Arts, and Interactive Arts and Sciences (especially the GAME program) provide easy opportunities for alignment.

In addition to the obvious need for proper staffing, there are also space and equipment considerations that would need to be addressed for such a position to be fully supported. Our current programs are completely acoustic, so the need for equipment and purposely appointment spaces is central to this recommendation. The Department of Visual Arts already has equipment and a well-appointed Media Lab that would be an important space for this program. The current Keyboard Lab (MWS 137) would need to be re-equipped with hardware and software, but the space is already

there. Should this program reside in MUSI we would also insist on a recording space large enough for a grand piano and a chamber group, which might be housed in one of the Music rooms on the first floor of the MIW. Emphasis on recording of live acoustic music would not only support the work we already do, but would also support an under-served area of recording arts.

The Undergraduate Programs Committee responded:

In the case of adding and revising courses, the committee may see some additional work. This will not be problematic.

The Dean of Humanities responded:

There is indeed great potential for such a programme to enhance the work already happening in the Department and making connections with many other areas. Resources are lacking now, but I encourage the Department to keep this idea in their thoughts as they plan for future work and resource requests (including, but not limited to, personnel, space, and equipment).

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted for consideration. The Committee recognizes that as the Department considers how to expand in “Sound Art” they will need to proceed through normal channels of advocacy for the resources that would be required.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

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| Responsible for approving: | Department |
| Responsible for resources: | Department/Dean |
| Responsible for implementation: | Department |
| Timeline: | Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2024-25. |

Recommendation #2: Build up Global Content and Activities throughout the curriculum.

The Department responded:

We are pleased with how our revised curriculum is taking hold as the implementation rolls out, and as we live in the revisions, we are seeing more places and ways in which we might make further difference in our own courses. At this juncture, much like our response to Recommendation #1, we have reached a point where further systemic change will require a new hire. We are now poised to make important changes if we were to have a dedicated person in such a position. An additional area to explore is in diversifying our large ensemble offerings beyond merely the Western classical and jazz traditions. Offering something like West African drumming and dancing or a steel-pan ensemble would not only broaden our majors’ practical musical experiences but would also be appealing to the greater student body. We will not be in a position to offer such an ensemble without a full-time specialist in a non-Western musical tradition. This commitment in the current situation requires a large investment - in space, equipment, and a full-time colleague to oversee its implementation and long-term sustainability.

The Undergraduate Programs Committee responded:

In the case of adding and revising courses, the committee may see some additional work. This will not be problematic.

The Dean of Humanities responded:

The Department’s work so far in this area is admirable. The same limitations to new directions as noted in the response to Recommendation #1 apply here, as well.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted for consideration. The Committee recognizes that as the Department considers how to enhance global content and activities within their curriculum, they will need to proceed through normal channels of advocacy for the resources that would be required.

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| Implementation Plan (1st Priority) | |
| Responsible for approving: | Department |
| Responsible for resources: | Department/Dean |
| Responsible for implementation: | Department |
| Timeline: | Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2024-25. |

Recommendation #3: Experiential Learning and the Community.

Additional text: Given Brock’s excellence in attracting and teaching those interested in music education, especially from the local/southern part of the Golden Horseshoe area, we highly recommend leveraging more interactions with community partners to expand visibility of the music program among local music programs and community groups and give students more hands-on experience during their degrees. This may be as simple as bringing community partners into upper-level classes to showcase and workshop their needs. It could also mean bringing in more high school, elementary, or grade school students for workshops with the students or co-creative activities. It might also mean having advanced students go out into the community to work with choirs, for example, or musical theatre groups, or schools. There is a wide menu of opportunities that could be considered that also reflects the preparedness and skill level of the students. We again recommend drawing on the expertise of the CCEE team to implement this recommendation.

The Department responded:

We are engaging with the community through:

- Instrumental ensembles welcome talented high school students among their community membership, especially Wind Ensemble and Brock Big Band.
- Through the MIW Recruitment Officer, 1-2 visits per semester of area high school music classes tour the facility and attend a Music@Noon concert, followed by an informal Q&A
- Yearly DSNB honour choir includes Brock Choirs and students as volunteers to help run the event.
- Avanti Chamber Choir and Chorus Niagara are both community choirs that support Brock students through Choral Scholar opportunities.
- Our two Music in the Community courses (MUSI 3P75 & MUSI 4P75) provide interested students with the infrastructure to pursue volunteer placement opportunities in support of their career path.
- Rachel Rensink-Hoff’s Summer Choral Intensive workshops continue to draw developing conductors and give local educators and students the opportunity to develop their skills onsite.

Connecting with high schools continues to be a priority for recruitment purposes, and to evolve the needs of our program to suit the music educators of tomorrow. Although we feel that we already do fairly well with community connections, we could do better in our relationship building with area and

GTA high schools and music teachers. The recent closure of two programs in the Hamilton area (Mohawk, McMaster) means we have an even more important role to fill for the students in that region who might have originally planned to go to their home institution.

The Dean of Humanities responded:

The Department of Music already does admirable work in the community space, and in providing experiential opportunities for their students. Much of those experiential opportunities are based on, and help develop, good community relations. As the Department observes in its response, there is always more that could be done, especially with local and GTA high schools and teachers.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted, although already current practice. The Committee expects that the Department will move forward as appropriate to enhance experiential learning opportunities for their students and expand their community connections.

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| Implementation Plan (1st Priority) | |
| Responsible for approving: | Department |
| Responsible for resources: | Department/Dean |
| Responsible for implementation: | Department with the support of CCEE |
| Timeline: | Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2024-25. |

Recommendation #4: Take advantage of Library supports.

The Department responded:

In our previous external review, a similar recommendation was made, which we addressed by inviting the Teaching & Learning Librarian (Humanities & Social Sciences) to our yearly Opening of Term Orientation for all students. It has been useful for students to hear from our Librarian directly about the services and supports available through the library.

One of the major challenges in having our students make better use of the library is simply the fact that our physical holdings are not housed near the MIW School. Recently we have implemented the ability to place selected titles on reserve in the MIW building; however, the space in the A/V Kiosk is insufficient to house all of the titles instructors in the entire MIW School would ideally want to be available to students. Otherwise, our students (and many of our faculty) rely primarily on online resources. We appreciate having access to holdings that are delivered through the campus mail system. We only recently moved from one weekly mail delivery to two, a move that should encourage more student use of this service.

As Music has specific library needs, Dr. Penner has developed her own resources to support students in their use of standard online music-specific resources, such as RILM and Grove Music Online, in support of music history courses. Dr. Penner will meet with the Music Librarian to discuss a yearly library site visit/workshop, led by library staff, to show music students how to navigate the building and explore the music collections and music-specific reference works.

The Dean of Humanities responded:

Access to library supports and resources remains a concern at locations removed from main campus. The Department, the Marilyn I Walker School, and the James A Gibson Library, have made some good progress in conquering the distance issue. The proposed plan to organize a visit by Music students to the main library is a good one to pursue.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted and in the process of implementation. The Committee believes that the Department, in consultation with the Library, is best positioned to determine appropriate strategies to move forward on this issue.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

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| Responsible for approving: | Department |
| Responsible for resources: | Department/Dean |
| Responsible for implementation: | Department with the support of the Library |
| Timeline: | Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2024-25. |

Recommendation #5: Explore the possibility of a Concurrent Education option for the music program and build out more robust opportunities for students to gain teaching experience.

The Department responded:

The Department wholeheartedly agrees with this recommendation, and we are happy to develop a reasonable plan in conjunction with the Faculty of Education. Dr. Rensink-Hoff feels personally compelled to explore this possibility. Having a Teacher’s College on campus is an asset, and we believe there is opportunity here that would benefit the students and both the Music and Education programs.

The Undergraduate Programs Committee responded:

In the case of adding and revising courses, the committee may see some additional work. This will not be problematic.

The Dean of Humanities responded:

This is a very good suggestion, and the Department’s eagerness to follow up with it is admirable. It has the Dean’s full support.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC considers this recommendation to be accepted for consideration. The Committee advises the Department to work with the Dean’s office and Faculty of Education to explore the viability of a Concurrent Education option.

Implementation Plan (1st Priority)

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| Responsible for approving: | Department |
| Responsible for resources: | Department/Dean |
| Responsible for implementation: | Department/Dean |
| Timeline: | Dean of Humanities to report by the end of academic year 2024-25. |

Recommendation #6: Continue to support music's access to the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre.**The Department responded:**

We are pleased that our reviewers fully understand the critical support the PAC provides for the functioning of our department, and the strong supportive role it plays for other units in the MIW. The few viable spaces within the MIW for collective music-making are already tightly booked by use of other programs, and the lack of sound mitigation measures through most of the MIW make any possible MUSI presence there unlivable for everyone, even if scheduling were to allow it. Also, although we are a small department, MUSI is also one of the most public-facing departments in the university. As we enjoy the privilege of making music in the PAC spaces, it is an important connecting point with the community as well; with community members populating our ensembles, and a strong community audience presence at our weekly RBC Foundation Music@Noon and other concerts, situating our public presence in these wonderful spaces reflects well upon the university.

Ultimately, however, we acknowledge that the recommendation is beyond our purview. We wish to echo the observations of our reviewers who recognize the critical relationship we hold with PAC in support of our programs, and what our presence in PAC brings to the community.

The Dean of Humanities responded:

The Dean's Office recognizes the importance of the Brock-PAC agreement for the programmes at the MIW - perhaps for Music more than any other programme, as the performance space at the PAC is crucial to the activities of the programme.

ARC Disposition of the Recommendation

ARC acknowledges the importance of this recommendation but considers it to be outside the Committee's jurisdiction. ARC advises the Department and Dean to proceed through normal channels of advocacy to ensure access to the FirstOntario Performing Arts Centre.

No Implementation Plan.**D. Summary of Recommendations:**

Recommendations 1-5 - First Priority

Recommendation 6 - No Implementation Plan required